

Million-Dollar 151

Chapter 151

Michael and Joseph, although perplexed, followed Beatrice's instructions, assisting her from her sickbed to visit Arabella.

Arabella was staying on the same floor as Dorian, the sixteenth. They had just arrived outside

Arabella's room when they saw Vivienne slowly approaching from the other end of the corridor.

Percival had been in an accident, so Vivienne hadn't had the chance to visit Dorian in the hospital the day before. She had finally found the time to do so that afternoon.

Naturally, she saw the Hawthorn family members, but she didn't give a damn. She passed by Arabella's room without even a second glance at them.

Arabella also saw Vivienne. She sat disheveled on the bed, watching Vivienne walk past her as if she didn't exist. Arabella could see arrogance, disdain, and schadenfreude in Vivienne's calm demeanor.

For some reason, Vivienne's presence reminded Arabella of the masked woman from that night. The calm expression the masked woman wore as she made an incision in Arabella's abdomen was eerily reminiscent of Vivienne's.

It was as if they didn't see her as a living human being but as an object they could manipulate at will.

"Ahh!" She couldn't help but scream, shouting in terror and rage, "I'm going to kill them! I'm going to kill them all!"

Not only did the Hawthorns standing at the door get a fright, but so did the entire floor of the hospital.

"Arabella, Arabella, it's alright now." Beatrice rushed in to comfort Arabella.

"Granny!" Arabella cried and clung to Beatrice. "The police don't believe me! Have I endured all this torment for nothing?"

"The people in the N&S Psychiatric Hospital are mentally ill. They don't have the capacity to be held legally responsible." Michael didn't show sympathy for Arabella but instead taunted her. "Even if the police did believe that someone planted bombs in your stomach, do you think there's a way to punish them? Can't you stop making trouble? Who told you to go there in the middle of the night?"

Arabella gritted her teeth in fury. She remembered clearly that night when she had called them for help, but not one of them had answered.

The only one who answered her call was Cordelia.

But now she couldn't risk alienating them. Elijah was in jail, the man in black was nowhere to be found,

and her reputation had been ruined due to her false accusations against Dorian. If Beatrice abandoned her too, she would have no one left to rely on.

So, in response to Michael's taunts, she said nothing. She only sobbed and asked Beatrice, "Granny, what should I do now?"

"Don't worry, Granny has a plan." Beatrice gently stroked Arabella's hair. With a glint in her eye and a hint of satisfaction in her voice, she reassured Arabella. "All you need to do is follow Granny's plan."

Dorian's room was on the same floor as Arabella's, so he had also heard her scream. At that moment, Cordelia was feeding him soup.

A nurse changing the IV drip nearby muttered, "She should be transferred to the psychiatric ward. Her constant screaming is scaring everyone."

Cordelia paused in her spooning, then continued as if nothing had happened.

Dorian's eyes darkened when he heard Arabella's scream, but he remained silent, remembering all the things Arabella had done.

The atmosphere in the room was silent and tense when Vivienne entered.

After seeing her, Cordelia and Dorian immediately brightened up. "Vivienne is here."

"How are you feeling today?" Vivienne asked.

She had given Dorian a life-saving pill. His internal injuries had healed, but the external ones still needed time.

Not to mention, the trauma Dorian had endured made it hard to find all the wounds.

"The doctor said if everything goes well, he should be able to leave the hospital in about a week."

Cordelia replied.

Vivienne nodded and sat quietly, watching as Cordelia finished feeding Dorian.

Once Cordelia left to wash the dishes, Vivienne asked Dorian, "Mr. Hawthorn, did my mother really only leave you a perfume formula?"

"Yes, only a perfume formula." Dorian replied with a flicker in his eyes.

Vivienne didn't press him any further, but she had a feeling that Dorian was hiding something from her.

Suddenly, the door to the room was pushed open. Vivienne and Dorian thought it was Cordelia returning, but when they looked up, they saw Beatrice's gloomy face with Michael and Joseph following behind her.

"Mother." Dorian's face darkened instantly.

"You recognize me as your mother?!" Beatrice began with a cold laugh. "I've been hospitalized for so long, and you've never once asked after me!"

"And have you ever asked after me while I've been hospitalized?" Dorian retorted coldly and then laughed. "Oh, how could I forget? Why would you ask? After all, weren't you one of the people who caused me to be hospitalized?"

Beatrice looked slightly embarrassed. In truth, she didn't want to visit Dorian, but her next plan required a sum of money.

Now that the Hawthorn family was in decline, she had no choice but to seek help from Dorian. "Give me two hundred thousand dollars, or I'll go to court and sue you for neglect and abandonment."

Cordelia approached the hospital room door and heard what Beatrice said. Her face immediately turned sour. She really didn't expect Beatrice to have the audacity to show up in front of them.

"We have severed ties with you. We even made it official with a legal document!" Cordelia walked in, her tone icy.

"Oh, how naive!" Beatrice scoffed. "Ask a lawyer. Can blood ties really be severed? As long as I have

no source of income, he, being my son, has to support me!"

"Don't forget, you took away the formula for Vivienne's mother's signature perfume. The value of that formula is enough to offset any support you try to claim." Dorian's face contorted. He was taken aback by Beatrice's audacity. They had agreed to sever ties, and now she was clinging to him again.

"Well, that was then; this is now." Beatrice retorted while shrugging. She could have sold the formula to get money, but she wanted to keep it as a way of resurrecting Hawthorn Perfumes Inc. in the future.

"Regardless, I raised you, and you have an obligation to support me. I'm not asking for much. It's just two hundred thousand. I promise I won't ask you for another penny after this."

"Your promises are worthless."

Chapter 152

Vivienne, who had been silently sitting by the side, gave a nonchalant glance at Beatrice and her crew.

"Let's take this to court." She said. "We can drag this out as long as it takes. Whatever the court decides, we'll abide by it."

Beatrice snapped her head around and snarled. "You have no say in this!"

"Vivienne's words are my own." Dorian retorted coldly.

"You!" Beatrice exploded. "I will expose your abandonment of me for everyone to know! You don't care about your reputation?"

"Ha!" Dorian chuckled. "Wasn't my reputation already tarnished by my own mother and adopted daughter?"

Even after it was proven that Arabella was lying, there were still many who preferred to believe the worst about others. Despite efforts to clarify the truth, the rumors spread faster, leading many to believe

Dorian was a child molester and rapist.

"Mom, if you want any money from me, let's follow Vivienne's advice and go to court." Dorian said calmly, "Whenever the verdict comes out, that's when I'll pay."

"Just a heads up." Vivienne added leisurely. "You have three sons and a daughter, counting Dorian. If the court decides to rule in your favor, they will only order it to be divided equally among the four of you.

"Considering your previous actions towards Mr. Hawthorn, the court will, at most, grant you the minimum living allowance of Havenwood."

Beatrice, left speechless, could only point her trembling finger at the three of them before storming out,

supported by Michael and Joseph.

Cordelia heaved a sigh. "Dorian, are you sure you're her biological son? Maybe you should have a paternity test."

As someone who cherished her own children, she couldn't understand why Beatrice didn't like Dorian.

She suspected that Dorian might not be her biological son.

"I had a paternity test done. I am her biological son." Dorian said in a low voice.

Years ago, he had secretly taken a paternity test, hoping to find out whether or not Beatrice was really his mother. He had hoped he wasn't her biological son, thinking it might explain why she treated him so horribly and give him some peace of mind. But the truth was, he was indeed her biological son.

Dorian grabbed Cordelia's hand. Despite his unfortunate family, he still had Cordelia, Thaddeus, and Vivienne. He felt blessed.

Seeing the loving gaze between Dorian and Cordelia reminded Vivienne of Percival for some reason.

"I'm going to pick up Thaddeus." As she stood up to leave, she turned back to Dorian. "Whether it's

Arabella or Elijah, anyone who hurts you will pay."

Dorian was startled and remained stunned even after Vivienne's footsteps had faded away.

"What's wrong?" Cordelia asked him curiously.

"Do you think Arabella's actions have anything to do with Vivienne?" Dorian frowned.

"You're not still worried about Arabella, are you?" Cordelia asked him after a moment of silence.

"What can Vivienne do anyway? If anything, it's probably Percival who's pulling the strings." She

added, "Vivienne is just trying to get back at them for you."

"I understand that." Dorian said with a bitter smile, "I just don't want them to get in trouble because of me."

"Don't worry, they know what they're doing." Cordelia reassured him.

After leaving Dorian's room, Vivienne passed by Arabella's room again. She walked by without a glance, but Arabella called out to her.

"Vivienne!"

Vivienne paused. With her hands in her pockets, she turned to look at her.

With Beatrice and the others gone, Arabella was alone in the room. She stared at Vivienne for a long time before breaking into a creepy smile. "I will take everything that belongs to you."

Vivienne furrowed her brows before a smirk crossed her lips. "N&S Psychiatric Hospital would be a good place for you."

Upon hearing the words "N&S Psychiatric Hospital," Arabella's body stiffened in shock and fear as she stared at Vivienne wide-eyed.

She clearly remembered the police mentioning that whatever happened in the N&S Psychiatric Hospital remained confidential. How did Vivienne know?

Vivienne didn't care about Arabella's reaction; she just kept walking. However, her expression became more serious.

In this whole debacle with Dorian, Arabella wasn't the only one she had a score to settle with.

Over the past few days, she had been keeping an eye on Elijah's whereabouts. Just as she was thinking about it, a message from Matthew came through, informing her that Elijah had just had an "incident" in the detention center and needed to be rushed to the hospital.

A cold smile spread across Vivienne's face. Perfect timing!

While responding to Matthew's text, Vivienne stepped into the elevator just as Percival's call came

through.

"Vivienne."

"What's up?" Vivienne's facial expression softened a bit upon hearing his voice.

"Rough day?" Percival's voice was low and soothing.

"You heard?" Vivienne raised an eyebrow, surprised at how quickly Percival had gotten wind of the fact that Beatrice's family had just paid her a visit and stirred up some trouble.

"Mmm." Percival didn't deny it. "I have a gift for you. Would that cheer you up?"

"What kind of gift?" Vivienne was intrigued now.

At that moment, Matthew's text came through. "Boss, someone beat us to nabbing Elijah. It looks like

Percival's guys, so I didn't start a fight."

Simultaneously, Percival's magnetic chuckle came through the phone. "Do you like this gift?"

A smile slowly spread across Vivienne's face.

"I love it!"

Chapter 153

Midland Manor.

In the cellar.

When Elijah awoke from unconsciousness, he found himself in the very place where he had held Riley and Raymond Fairfax captive.

His hands and feet were spread and fastened to the wall, and standing before him was a stoic-faced Raymond.

"Why are you here?!" He asked, stunned and unsure.

Raymond glanced at him with disgust but didn't respond.

"I'm talking to you!" Elijah was quick to anger when Raymond ignored him. After all, he had always seen the Fairfaxes as easy prey.

His original plan for that day was to escape from the local county jail. He feigned a sudden illness by overdosing on pills. He was to be taken to the hospital, where his gang, GTO, would help him escape.

However, the ambulance suddenly changed its route halfway and headed in the opposite direction.

Realizing something was wrong, he tried to fight back but was promptly sedated and knocked out.

Now, after seeing Raymond, it was clear he'd been intercepted.

But he didn't believe Raymond had the capacity to do so.

“Call out the person behind you! Who is it? Vivienne?”

“It’s me. Surprised?” Vivienne’s cold voice echoed in the room.

She was dressed in a black hoodie and a baseball cap. She radiated an air of oppressive gloom.

Percival, also dressed in a casual black outfit, had a commanding presence.

“So it is you!” Elijah glared maliciously at Vivienne, his gaze then falling on Percival. “I thought you had some real skills, but in the end, you’re just relying on a man!”

Vivienne ignored his insult; her frosty face was devoid of any expression. She looked at Elijah, her voice as cold as ice. “You’ve been hiding for so long. It’s time we settle our scores.”

“Kill me if you want!” Elijah retorted defiantly.

“I’m a civilized person. I don’t like violence.” Vivienne suddenly laughed, her pace unhurried.

Elijah was stunned. She wasn’t going to kill him?

However, after looking at Vivienne’s smiling face, he felt a chill run down his spine.

Suppressing his fear, he asked, “What do you want?”

Vivienne didn’t answer him. Instead, she turned to Raymond. “Do you know why I asked you to be here?”

“To get revenge?” Raymond hesitated before asking.

He hadn’t forgotten how Elijah had tortured him to force Riley to make perfume.

The cellar was filled with an array of torture devices, most of which Elijah had tried out on him. As a result, his body was covered in scars hidden beneath his clothes.

“Not just that.” Vivienne motioned to the cellar, filled with the same tools of torture that the police had confiscated but Percival’s men had restored.

“Riley is a special child. Her talent in perfumery matches mine and is bound to be coveted by many. If you want to protect her, you need to harden your heart. Use him to practice being ruthless today.”

Vivienne handed Raymond a whip covered in sharp spikes.

Raymond hesitated while holding the whip. Hating Elijah was one thing, but hurting him was another.

“You can’t do it?” Vivienne’s voice turned cold. “If you can’t handle this, how can you protect Riley?”

Startled, Raymond saw the malevolence in Elijah’s eyes and knew Vivienne was right.

Some people, unless you beat them so badly that they steer clear of you, would always think they could walk all over you.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Raymond steeled his heart and began to whip Elijah.

“Raymond! You dare hit me?!” Elijah cursed in pain. “I will kill you, give your sister to old men to play with, and then kill her!”

“Shut up!” Raymond’s face grew colder, and he lashed the whip across Elijah’s mouth.

With each insult thrown by Elijah, Raymond’s whips grew harsher and stronger.

And Elijah’s curses gradually faded as the whip continued to rain down on him.

The spikes on the whip tore through his skin. His blood mingled with his cold sweat, staining his prison clothes.

Despite the pain that took his breath away, he gritted his teeth and refused to beg for mercy.

Vivienne watched for a while before leaving with Percival.

“Take your time; don’t rush. I’m going to have a romantic chat with my fiancé in the courtyard.” She told Raymond.

“Vivienne!” After noticing that Vivienne was about to leave, Elijah called out to her as he gasped in pain. “What? You can’t bear to watch? You’re still a useless woman! You can’t even avenge your father

personally. You need this wretch to do it for you!”

“Heh.” Vivienne laughed lightly as she turned back to look at Elijah. “If I started, you wouldn’t be able to stand long enough for him to take his revenge.”

She shook her head at Elijah as if she were looking at a fool. “Trust me, when it’s my turn, you’ll regret the words you’ve said today.”

With that, she left the cellar arm-in-arm with Percival.

Vivienne had to admit that the villa Elijah had chosen had a certain charm. It was night now, and the courtyard was bathed in the silvery light of the moon, casting an ethereal glow on Vivienne and Percival.

Ignoring the fact that a man was being tortured in the cellar, the scene could almost be described as romantic.

“Vivienne.” Percival suddenly pulled Vivienne into his arms, his voice husky. “You said you wanted to have a romantic chat with me?”

Vivienne blushed slightly. She wasn’t sure how those words had slipped out. She coughed lightly to

change the subject. "Does your wound still hurt?"

"Answer me." Percival wasn't letting her off the hook. His uninjured arm was wrapped tightly around her

waist. "How do you want to express love? How do you want to discuss our relationship?"

"Cough, cough!"

Just as things were getting serious, Leopold came barging in. In his hand, he held a handful of cattle

hair needles. "What about this?" He made a suggestion to Vivienne and Percival. "We stick these all

over that jerk, Elijah. That should teach him a lesson, huh?"

"I'm thinking you should be the one to learn a lesson first!" Percival's face turned red with anger. He

could feel that his relationship with Vivienne had made significant progress since his accident. They

were so close. In just a few more steps, they could admit their feelings for each other.

"What's going on? What were you guys doing?" Leopold finally noticed the intimate position Vivienne

and Percival were in and realized he had unintentionally disrupted their moment.

Under Percival's brooding gaze, he shrank back, nervously explaining, "These cattle hair needles...

They're hard to find, especially when you need so many at once. I got too excited, so I didn't notice."

With a swift kick, Percival sent him packing. "Beat it!"

Chapter 154

Leopold, dejected, turned to leave, but after a couple of steps, he turned back, placing the cattle hair needles in Vivienne's hand.

Vivienne held the cattle hair needles, exchanging a silent gaze with Percival. Whatever romantic atmosphere they had was shattered by Leopold's interruption.

Eventually, they shared a warm smile.

Checking the time, Vivienne turned to head back to the basement, only to hear Percival calling her from behind. "Vivienne."

She turned around to see him standing in the moonlight, smiling at her gently. "I'll be waiting for our next round."

Vivienne's cheeks flushed a crimson hue, and she left, holding the cattle hair needles.

By the time she reached the basement, Elijah was barely alive.

Raymond, following Vivienne's instructions, had tested all the torture tools in the basement on Elijah.

He had arrived with a fearful gaze, which now lay cold and hardened as he looked at the wounds and bloodstains he had inflicted on Elijah.

Vivienne was right. Without a ruthless heart, how could he protect his little sister?

"You may leave now." Vivienne dismissed him when she saw her goal was met.

Once Raymond left, a weakened Elijah managed to lift his head to look at her. "Ha. Is this the best you can do?"

"Save that for later." Vivienne taunted him, waving the cattle hair needles in her hand.

Elijah's pupils dilated in fear. He was familiar with the terrifying effects of the cattle hair needles, having used it on Dorian himself.

"Don't worry, I won't disappoint you." Vivienne assured him with a slight smile. "Whatever my family has

endured, I will make you pay a hundredfold."

That night, nobody knew what Elijah suffered under Vivienne's hand.

When Vivienne emerged and Leopold went down to the basement to check, he was met with a foul smell. Elijah was hanging from the wall, convulsing, having lost control of his bladder and bowels.

But this was just the beginning. Vivienne wasn't joking about making Elijah pay a hundredfold.

Although law enforcement prevented her from keeping him captive for a hundred days, a mere seven

days were enough for Elijah to experience hell.

Seven days later, Vivienne and Percival went to the hospital to pick up Dorian upon his discharge. The hospital's TV was broadcasting news.

"Breaking news: Elijah, the convict who disappeared a week ago, was found unconscious in front of East District Police Station this morning, severely wounded."

After hearing Elijah's name, Dorian's eyes flashed with fear, while Cordelia muttered, "He got what he deserved."

Vivienne noticed Dorian's fear and his forced composure. She felt that seven days of torment were too little.

"By the way, Vivienne." Cordelia mentioned as they left the hospital. "Did you hear about Arabella's sudden transfer?"

Vivienne hadn't paid much attention to such insignificant people and merely replied, "No, I didn't."

"I heard she and your grandmother all went to Rivenwood." Cordelia wondered. Just a few days ago,

Beatrice had been begging for money in Dorian's hospital room. How did they suddenly afford to send

Arabella to Rivenwood, a place far pricier than Havenwood?

In the afternoon, when Vivienne and Percival went to Cloudcrest High School, they also heard rumors about Arabella possibly transferring to Rivenwood.

Vivienne didn't pay it much mind. Even if Arabella moved to Rivenwood, as long as she dared harm her family again, Vivienne had ways to ensure she led a miserable existence in Rivenwood.

Compared to Arabella, she was more concerned about something else.

She had come to Cloudcrest High School to find someone.

During her mother's last mission, nearly all the members of her team were sacrificed. Only her mother and another person survived.

And that person disappeared afterward.

After moving to Havenwood, she heard that the person's daughter was studying at Cloudcrest High School under a different name.

She was here to find her.

But despite going through Cloudcrest High School's student records multiple times, she couldn't locate the girl.

She even started to doubt the accuracy of Matthew's information.

Moreover, afraid of attracting the GTO's attention and endangering the girl, she couldn't search too openly.

...

Just as Vivienne had almost forgotten about Arabella, with less than half a month until the college entrance test, Arabella returned.

One day, as Percival was driving Vivienne to school, they were rear-ended right outside the school gate.

Rather than a simple accident, it seemed more like a deliberate hit.

Thomas, who had been driving behind Percival for years, was taken aback. He had never met anyone bold enough to hit Percival's car, not even in Rivenwood. Yet, here in Havenwood, he had.

Before he could get out of the car to question the culprit, the person came over first.

“Oh dear, Sis, I was so excited to see you that I accidentally drove a bit too fast. I hope you won't hold it against me for damaging your hubby's car.”

Arabella's pretty face appeared outside the car window.

Vivienne lowered the car window, looking calmly at Arabella outside.

This girl really was a case of a healed wound that forgot the pain. She had gone to Rivenwood, yet she still came back to provoke her.

Arabella seemed to have gained some confidence after her trip to Rivenwood.

"Sis, why are you so quiet?" Arabella looked at Vivienne with a mischievous grin. She wished she could tear Vivienne's beautiful face apart, but instead, she said, "You're not really mad, are you? It's just a car, and your husband can easily afford to fix it. If not, how about I apologize to you?"

Before Vivienne could respond, a tall figure walked up to Arabella and arrogantly said, "Arabella, as a Brooks heiress, you shouldn't apologize to such a nonentity."

The Brooks? Vivienne raised an eyebrow slightly.

"Oh dear, Tristan, she's still my sister after all." Arabella's triumphant expression was impossible to hide.

"Your real sister is the Brooks heiress. How could she possibly compare?" Tristan's scornful eyes landed on Vivienne.

"Yeah, Tristan's right." Another man, dressed in a suit, got out of the car and walked over to Arabella, backing her up. "Arabella, don't just go around claiming people as your sisters. Not everyone is worthy of being related to you."

Vivienne glanced at the man. He bore some resemblance to Percival.

Thomas, in the driver's seat, turned sour at his appearance. Percival, sitting next to Vivienne, lifted the curtain of his gaze and looked over, his tone cool and indifferent. "Paul Ellington."

Vivienne had guessed Paul's identity the moment she saw him. While investigating Percival, she naturally scrutinized the Ellington family as well.

This man was the son of Richard Ellington's eldest son and Percival's cousin.

"Percival, even if I'm just your cousin, shouldn't you greet me when you see me? And you're addressing me so informally?"

Chapter 155

Percival slightly raised his eyes, his stern face devoid of any expression. His half-closed eyes glimmered with a dangerous light.

Seeing this, Thomas immediately chimed in. "Please show some respect. Ms. Hawthorn is our master's

fiancée."

In front of others, Thomas referred to Percival as his master.

Paul scoffed, his disdainful gaze brazenly sizing up Vivienne. "Fiancée? Did Grandpa lose his mind to choose such a girl with no background at all for you?"

This was something that many members of the Ellington family couldn't comprehend. Richard was so partial to Percival, so how could he arrange a marriage with Vivienne, a girl with no background at all?

However, because of this, many had ulterior motives. They thought if they could find a strong alliance with a powerful family, with the support of a powerful father-in-law, they might compete with Percival for

the head of the family.

Paul obviously thought so too. "She is indeed pretty. She's suitable for a fling, but not for marriage. We, born into the Ellington family, should know that only daughters from noble families like the Brooks are suitable for marriage into our family."

His gaze fell on Arabella's face. Arabella timely showed him a shy smile as he pleasingly said, "Only the likes of Arabella are worthy of entering our family's door."

"I didn't know that our family had such a rule!" Before Paul could continue to ingratiate himself with Arabella by humiliating Vivienne, a cold, angry laugh from Richard came from Percival's car.

"Paul, did you set this rule yourself?!"

"Grandfather..." Paul's face changed as he saw Percival holding up his phone at him, displaying Richard's stern face.

He didn't expect Percival to call Richard.

"Did I allow you to go to Havenwood?" Richard's contemptuous gaze glanced at Arabella. "Since you disobeyed me and went anyway, don't bother coming back! Men who only think of living under a woman's skirt don't deserve to stay in the Ellington family!"

"Grandfather!" Paul was shocked. He didn't understand why Richard wouldn't support his marriage to the Brooks family's daughter, which was a great thing.

"Also, Vivienne is the granddaughter-in-law I personally chose. She's not some random thing like you to compare with!" Richard warned her. "You'd better respect her!"

Arabella's face changed drastically when she was referred to as a "random thing."

"Richard, what do you mean?!" Tristan stood up to defend Arabella.

"You're not even qualified to talk to me!" Richard didn't even give Tristan a glance.

Tristan's face also turned ugly; he was the adopted son of the Brooks family, and from Richard's position, when he was unhappy, Tristan didn't even qualify to step forward.

"Percival!" Richard's firepower switched to Percival again. "Don't you know how to protect your own fiancée? Do you even deserve to marry Vivienne? Let me tell you, there are plenty of good men in the Ellington family. If you dare let Vivienne suffer, I will replace you!"

Percival grunted, speaking unhurriedly, "Thomas."

He never intended to let Paul go. The reason he called Richard was because Vivienne often said that problems that could be solved by telling on others were not problems.

So he tattled.

Yes, he was following his fiancée's lead.

He was pretty good at it, too.

"Yes!" Thomas had long been annoyed by Paul's repeated provocations against Percival in Rivenwood.

But then, considering they were all members of the Ellington family, and with Richard mediating, he

couldn't go too far.

Now he could finally act without any concerns.

Paul was totally stunned. To tell the truth, it was him who had encouraged Arabella to crash into Percival's car just now. He had done similar things many times in Rivenwood, and each time he was just scolded by Richard and it was over.

But he didn't expect Richard to be so angry this time.

"Thomas, you're nothing but Percival's lapdog. Touch me and see!" Paul still didn't believe Percival would go too far.

However, Thomas waved his hand in mid-air, and suddenly five or six people appeared, directly grabbing Paul and dragging him towards the alley.

"When you beat him, remember to record it." Percival added leisurely. "I need to send it to Grandfather as proof."

And so Paul was dragged into the alley and given a thorough beating, and Thomas, following Percival's instructions, recorded the whole process of Paul getting beaten.

"Percival! I'm your cousin! You're doing this for a low-life..." Paul howled in pain.

As soon as he began to insult Vivienne, Thomas, who was filming, reminded him. "This video is to be sent to the old master. If you continue to insult Ms. Hawthorn, I'm afraid when the old master sees it, you won't just get this one beating."

Paul immediately shut up. He was now only cursing at Percival and Thomas, and didn't dare say another word about Vivienne.

By the time Paul had taken his beating and was dragged out like a lifeless mutt, Thomas kindly had him dumped on Arabella's parked Chevy.

Arabella and Tristan were stunned.

Arabella, feigning concern, asked, "Paul, are you alright?"

Paul glanced at Arabella and grunted, too pained to speak. He didn't expect that Thomas would actually allow the beating. It was clear that there was no mercy shown.

But as he gazed at Arabella, he thought of Richard, who was currently smitten by that nobody, Vivienne.

Once he had Arabella wrapped around his finger, Richard's attitude would surely change.

After all, Arabella was the lost child the Brooks family had just found. The entire Brooks family had been heartbroken for her, as she had been lost and suffering for over a decade, longing to compensate her for her hardships.

As long as he could marry Arabella, the Brooks family would surely help him push Percival out of the family's inheritance for Arabella's sake.

Arabella, though outwardly showing concern for Paul, looked down on him. Her gaze involuntarily landed on Percival.

Now, she was the beloved lady of one of Rivenwood's four major families, the Brooks family. The only one worthy of her was Percival, and only she could stand by Percival's side. Paul was nothing, and Vivienne was even less.

With this thought in mind, she put on a different face than when she had dealt with Vivienne earlier and spoke to Percival in a gentle and soft voice. "I hit your car, Percival. I'll naturally compensate you. Let's connect on Facebook so we can discuss the damages."

Percival didn't even bother to look at her, and Thomas stepped in to stop her. "I'm sorry, but besides his fiancée, my master doesn't friend other women or dogs on Facebook."

Chapter 156

Arabella's face fell.

Was she being dismissed as a dog?

With a cold gaze, she looked at Thomas. "And who are you to stop me?"

She tried to open the car door on Percival's side and reach for his hand.

In the past, she would never dare act this way towards Percival, but now, as a member of the Brooks family, she had the confidence to do so, believing that Percival would respect the Brooks family's name.

Her courage had grown considerably.

However, as soon as her hand touched the car door, it swung open from inside, and she was kicked away by Percival.

Arabella fell to the ground, feeling as if every bone in her body had been broken. With tears in her eyes, she looked at Percival.

"Arabella!" Tristan, furious, rushed over to attack Percival. "You dare hurt her?! I'll kill you!"

But before he could even touch Percival's suit, the men who had beaten Paul earlier stepped in his way, pinning him down.

"Percival! Fight me one-on-one if you dare!" Tristan's face was distorted with anger as he was pinned to the ground, still yelling.

Percival didn't so much as give him a glance. He casually adjusted the cuffs of his suit, speaking to

Thomas in a detached tone. "The car's dirty. Get me a new one."

Thomas nodded. "Yes." He then took out his phone and called for another car.

Soon, a new car arrived.

Percival, holding Vivienne's hand, got into the car. He glanced at Thomas. "If you can't handle this, go to Fariana Isle!"

Thomas shuddered. "Yes."

He immediately called for a tow truck to take away Arabella's sports car, with Paul still in it.

"What are you doing?" Arabella, shocked, tried to stand up despite the pain. "This is my car!"

"There's still someone in the car!" Paul also cried out in fear, struggling to jump out.

The tow truck driver paid them no mind and drove towards the scrapyard.

"Percival!" Arabella realized Percival's intentions and immediately put on her usual pitiful act. "You've gone too far!"

Vivienne hadn't seen Arabella's victim act in a while and found it somewhat novel. She watched her for a while longer.

Percival didn't even bother to look at her.

Thomas drove the car into the school, leaving Tristan, who was still yelling on the ground, in a cloud of exhaust fumes.

In the school's parking lot, Thomas reported the information he had gathered to Percival.

"A month ago, Beatrice suddenly approached the Brooks family, saying that Arabella is the daughter of the Brooks family's head, Scott Brooks. The Brooks family, upon receiving the news, immediately sent people to bring Arabella to Rivenwood."

"Scott? I thought he never married. Where does this daughter come from?" Percival frowned.

"Scott had a girlfriend whom he loved very much over a decade ago." Thomas answered. "They were about to get married when she suddenly left him. Scott has been looking for her ever since, but to no avail. Later, he found Arabella, who turned out to be his daughter with that woman."

"Are we sure she's his biological daughter?" Percival leaned back in the leather seat, his fingers

drumming on the window.

"They did a paternity test." Thomas said, "With Arabella's abilities, it's unlikely that she could have tampered with the results under the watchful eyes of the Brooks family in Rivenwood."

Vivienne sat quietly on the side.

The Brooks family?

Interesting.

No wonder Arabella was so confident today. She had become the heiress to one of the Four Prominent Families of Rivenwood, the Brooks family.

"Spread the word about all the things Arabella did in Havenwood to the Brooks family." Percival ordered. "Every noble family there needs to know. We don't need to save dignity for the Brooks family."

Thomas immediately carried out the order.

They had thought that after being humiliated by Percival at the school gate, Arabella would be too ashamed to return to school.

Surprisingly, she was unbowed, bypassing the hospital and going straight to school after Tristan was released by Percival's men.

By the time Vivienne and Percival entered the faculty office, word of Arabella's return had spread throughout the school.

And Arabella had made a grand entrance, parading around as the heiress of the Brooks family, with Tristan acting as her bodyguard.

Vivienne had heard a bit about Tristan from Thomas. Supposedly, he was once a street kid, saved by Scott's missing girlfriend, and later adopted by the Brooks family.

Therefore, Tristan felt indebted to Arabella's mother and pledged to protect Arabella forever when she was found. He followed Arabella like a guardian angel.

No matter what outrageous act Arabella committed, he not only turned a blind eye but even helped her out.

Vivienne initially didn't care. As long as Arabella and Tristan didn't mess with her, she couldn't be bothered to give them the time of day.

But come afternoon break, Vivienne and Percival happened to pass by Arabella's classroom, finding a crowd gathered around. Coral was in the center, her eyes red and a handprint visible on her left cheek.

Arabella was nestled in Tristan's arms, crying as if her heart would break, weakly accusing Coral amid her sobs. "Coral, I've let bygones be bygones; why are you still against me now that I'm back?"

And she seemingly appeared more pitiful than Coral, who'd been slapped.

Without thinking, Vivienne knew this was Arabella retaliating for Coral previously helping her.

She walked up to Coral and asked, "Who did this?"

Coral remained silent, her furious yet somewhat fearful gaze fixed on Tristan.

Vivienne looked up at Tristan.

The sight of Percival behind Vivienne reminded Tristan of the humiliation he'd just suffered and the resentment he harbored for being held down.

He guessed that Percival's pals must be lurking nearby, so he held back his anger, simply stating to

Vivienne with a frosty face, "She just knocked Arabella down. I was merely disciplining her."

He didn't believe he'd done anything wrong. "If you teachers can't keep your students in line, then it's up to us relatives to protect our own."

"I didn't!" Coral clutched her swollen cheek as tears welled in her eyes. "Arabella fell on her own and blamed it on me!"

"You liar!" Tristan said coldly, "Arabella's arm is injured! Besides, why would she frame you?"

"Are you saying Arabella hasn't framed people before?" Vivienne shot a meaningful look at Arabella, who was nestled in Tristan's arms.

Chapter 157

Arabella's face stiffened. She averted her eyes, avoiding Vivienne's piercing gaze.

Regardless of her evasions, the school's students hadn't forgotten about the disgusting things she'd done before, and they started to chatter. "Yeah, Arabella loves to frame people repeatedly."

"First, she almost killed Faye from Class Eighteen by giving her the wrong treatment, then when Ms. Vivienne stepped in to save her, she accused Ms. Vivienne of stealing her credit."

"She falsely accused her foster father of assaulting her when she was young. I think that's the worst thing anyone can ever do."

"Exactly. I bet this time she's trying to frame Coral."

"She must be seeking revenge because Coral testified for her when she falsely accused her own foster father."

Arabella trembled with anger, but Tristan misinterpreted her reaction as sadness and fiercely defended

Arabella to Coral.

"Even if Arabella did frame you, it must have been your fault. You must have done something to upset her!"

The surrounding students fell silent, taken aback by his outburst. They wondered if this guy was out of his mind.

According to him, even if Arabella hurt someone else, it was their fault. Arabella was completely blameless. Was he crazy?

Vivienne had had enough of Arabella and Tristan's drama. She turned to Coral and said, "Tell me in detail what just happened."

Coral had been biting her lip and holding back her tears without anyone to support her. But now that

Vivienne had stepped up, she finally had an outlet for her grievances, and her tears started to flow uncontrollably.

"I was just going upstairs back to class when Arabella suddenly ran past me, fell down, and then accused me while crying."

"You liar!" Tristan clearly didn't believe her and moved to slap Coral again.

Percival swiftly kicked him in the knee, and Tristan, a tall bloke of over six feet, surprisingly fell forward onto the ground.

Tristan gazed at Percival in disbelief. He had heard rumors that Percival's leg had miraculously healed.

However, his impression of Percival was still that of a spoiled and disabled playboy.

Even though he was an adopted son of the Brooks family, to survive and gain more resources in the

Brooks family, he had always held himself to high standards and developed impressive physical skills.

Even half of the Brooks family's bodyguards were no match for him.

He had always looked down on the pampered scions of Rivenwood's four prominent families, like

Percival. He felt that without their privileged backgrounds, none of them could compare to him.

Plus, after the incident at the school gate, he was even more resentful towards Percival. He was

convinced that if it weren't for Percival's backup, he could have easily taught Percival a lesson.

But now he was effortlessly knocked down by someone he considered useless. He tried to get up but

found that he couldn't move. What he didn't know was that Vivienne had used a silver needle.

Vivienne didn't even spare him a glance. "Give him back double what he gave you."

"I..." Coral looked at Tristan's cold gaze and was too scared to act.

"What? You can't even fight back when you're bullied?" Vivienne said indifferently, "If you don't, do you think she'll let you off?"

Coral was taken aback and realized that Vivienne was right.

Her feud with Arabella was already formed. If she didn't have the courage to fight back today, she would only face more intense bullying tomorrow.

So she gritted her teeth, walked over to Tristan, grabbed his collar, and returned two slaps.

One for each he had given her, just as Vivienne had instructed.

"You... you dare hit me?!" Tristan glared at Coral from his prone position on the ground.

Coral was scared but forced herself not to back down and said boldly, "You hit me; why can't I hit you back?!"

"Tristan!" Arabella cried, rushing over to hold Tristan, her face full of concern. Instead of accusing

Coral, she glared at Vivienne. "Sis, you are a teacher. How can you let a student hit someone? Is this how a teacher should act?"

Vivienne just smirked. "A student has been bullied, and I, as a teacher, let her stand up for herself. Is

that a problem? And who saw me let Coral hit someone?"

She scanned the students of Class One. "Did any of you see that?"

The students shook their heads. "No!"

Arabella's reputation was beyond redemption.

So what if she was the newly recognized heiress of the Brooks family?

Didn't she still act superior and look down on them as if she were some proud princess?

Ms. Vivienne was the teacher of Class Eighteen. Ever since she invited Mr. James and his team to

teach Class Eighteen, the students' grades have improved drastically. Charlotte, Faye, and Logan all

made it into the top ten of the grade.

Everyone was green with envy. Just when everyone was thinking about how to ask Vivienne to let Mr.

James teach them, Vivienne had already invited Mr. James to give lectures.

Apart from the usual curriculum of Class Eighteen, Mr. James's team would dedicate two periods each

week to instruct them. In just a few weeks, they noticed a significant improvement and a substantial

rise in their grades.

With such a gem of a teacher like Vivienne, how could they possibly assist Arabella?

"You!" Arabella ground her teeth in anger while glaring at them.

A bunch of backstabbers!

They used to pester her for help, and now that she was gone for a short while, they all turned against her.

Just wait and see!

Arabella turned to Vivienne, her voice as cold as ice. "Tristan is my father's adopted son. Do you really think that with Percival backing you, we, the Brooks family, wouldn't dare touch you?"

"The Brooks family?" Vivienne looked down at her foot on Tristan's right hand, which was about to strike Coral. "Are you guys big shots?"

"Huh!" Percival couldn't help but laugh.

The Brooks family?

They weren't impressive at all!

Arabella's face flushed with humiliation at Percival's laughter. The Brooks family might not be as powerful as the Ellington family, but they were one of the top families in Rivenwood. And yet, they were

being treated like insignificant ants.

As for Percival, she could let it slide. But what right did Vivienne have?

Vivienne crushed Tristan's fingers under her shoe, watching as he grimaced in pain. She quickly pulled out her phone and dialed the school security office. "There's an intruder on campus, and a student has been assaulted. Are you guys blind?"

"Ms. Vivienne, we're on our way!"

"Vivienne, you bitch!" Tristan cursed. "Arabella is right. You're nothing but a cruel and vicious bitch! Just you wait!"

Vivienne stood there with her hands in her pockets. Her cold gaze was fixed on him, and her foot was still crushing his fingers.

"Sister! Please remove your foot! Don't step on Tristan's fingers anymore!" Arabella, shocked at

Vivienne's audacity, added fuel to the fire. "Tristan, this is all my fault! She's treating you like this because she hates me!"

"Don't beg her. She's just a..." Tristan's words hung in the air as he suddenly found himself unable to

utter another word.

Vivienne put away her silver needle, gave Arabella a cold glance, and walked away with Percival.

Chapter 158

Tristan remained frozen in his stroke-like stance with his mouth hanging open and drooling, looking like a complete fool, until the school security had to drag him away.

With her backing gone, Arabella didn't dare cause any more trouble. Despite now being the heiress of the Brooks family, her past deeds in Havenwood were too vile and fresh in everyone's memory for anyone to want to associate with her.

The only ones hovering around her were those hoping to climb up the social ladder through her connection with the Brooks family.

So she had no choice but to feign peace. "Coral, I may have misunderstood what happened earlier. I ran upstairs too quickly."

"Shut up!" Coral stepped forward and slapped her. "Stop pretending. You set me up on purpose! If not, why were you just crying while your mentally ill brother was hitting me and not stopping him?"

"You... you hit me!" Arabella had been enjoying a privileged life in Rivenwood for the past month, being pampered nonstop by the Brooks family. She was used to being treated like a queen and couldn't bear

any insults or mistreatment.

“Yeah, I hit you! You can frame me, so why can't I hit you?!” Coral had always had a short fuse. Each time she thought about how Arabella used her in the past, she could feel her blood boil.

“You didn’t fall over earlier or later, but precisely when you were passing by me! With all your crying and shouting, who would believe you weren’t intentionally framing me?!”

Having said that, Coral turned around and walked away. However, halfway out, she started to worry.

Ever since the Lockwood family was disciplined by Percival, she was no longer the reckless child who only caused trouble for her family.

She was now afraid of possible revenge from the Brooks family, given that she had offended Arabella and hit Tristan.

So, after much thought, she decided to seek advice from Vivienne.

When Coral arrived, Vivienne was planning the upcoming exam schedule for Class Eighteen. Percival, having nothing else to do, was feeding her snacks. Vivienne accepted whatever Percival offered her.

Seeing her head buried in the documents while chewing and puffing her cheeks like a little squirrel

made Percival swallow a lump in his throat. She was simply too adorable.

"Ms. Vivienne." Coral called out from the doorway.

"What is it?" Vivienne swallowed the nuts in her mouth and turned to Coral. She was puzzled as to why

Percival was suddenly feeding her so many nuts. Her cheeks were even starting to ache.

"I... Can I transfer to Class Eighteen?" Coral asked shyly.

With her head down and eyes averted, Coral waited for Vivienne's response. She had always looked

down upon Class Eighteen and didn't have a good relationship with many of its students.

"If you want to transfer, then transfer." Vivienne didn't object. One more student wouldn't make much of

a difference.

"Then I'll have my mom come to the school to process the paperwork right away." Coral left happily

after receiving Vivienne's approval.

Just as Vivienne turned back to her documents, Percival stuffed another nut into her mouth. She

glanced at him and saw him sitting there, watching her with a smile on his face, looking as if he were

appreciating a masterpiece. She was utterly confused by his behavior.

Back at the Brooks family mansion in Rivenwood, the atmosphere in the living room was eerily silent.

Judith sat on a leather couch, watching her eldest son, Scott, answer a phone call. After a few

murmurs, he hung up. She finally asked, "What's the result of the investigation into Arabella's paternity

test report?"

If Vivienne were here, she would recognize Judith as the elderly woman she had saved at the foot of

Emerald Mountain.

"There was no falsification. Arabella is indeed my daughter." Scott replied, placing his phone on the

coffee table.

"Mom," Timothy Brooks, Judith's second son, asked with confusion, "Didn't we do a paternity test when

we first brought her back? Why do it again?"

"Or do you and Scott not believe that Arabella is Scott's daughter?" Melissa Brooks, Judith's daughter,

chimed in. She then shook her head. "I think you're overthinking it. How could Aunt Beatrice manipulate

the paternity test under our noses?"

Her "Aunt Beatrice" was none other than Beatrice Hawthorn.

Judith sat back in her chair, her old and clouded eyes narrowing, exuding an aura of solemnity. She

remained silent. Scott also kept a calm face, giving nothing away.

Ashley Edwards, sitting next to Melissa, smiled at her. "Mom, Uncle Scott and Grandma probably couldn't accept what Arabella has done in Havenwood."

Everyone in the room fell silent once again.

For some reason, news about Arabella's multiple attempts to frame her foster sister in Havenwood, her accusations of rape against her foster father, and her near-fatal medical misconduct spread quickly in Rivenwood that morning.

It seemed as though the news was deliberately kept from the Brooks until the last minute, by which time the rest of the town's prominent families were already in the know.

"I did the math. She's been in Havenwood jail twice." Ashley recounted as a mischievous grin appeared on her face while ticking off her fingers. "Once for nearly killing someone with her botched medical skills, and then again for trying to cover up her false claim of being assaulted by her foster father. She went as far as attempting to silence a witness."

Ignoring the increasingly dark expressions on the Brooks' faces, she continued. "Her foster father was

too soft. He didn't press charges for slander, or else she would've been in jail a third time.”

“Enough, Ashley! Stop it!” Melissa intervened, noticing the grim faces of Judith and Scott.

“If I don't say it, does that mean others won't? Do you have any idea how much I was embarrassed at school today because of Arabella?” Ashley responded, her brows furrowed in frustration.

Despite being an Edwards by birth, she had spent more time in the Brooks mansion than in her own family home.

She used to be the youngest daughter in this family, basking in the attention and affection of all the Brooks family members. But then Arabella, who was younger than her by six months, arrived and stole all their attention.

Arabella had been back for just over a month, but Ashley felt neglected.

Hence, Ashley had no love for Arabella.

Regardless of her feelings, she knew her place. Her uncle, Scott was the head of the Brooks family, and Arabella was his only child. For her sake and the Edwards', she couldn't speak ill of Arabella.

But Arabella was too much to handle. Ashley had tried to get along with her, but Arabella was always making things difficult. It made the Brooks believe Ashley was jealous, and their attitude towards her

cooled significantly.

But now...

“Grandma, Uncle, you have no idea what my classmates were saying. They said it's disgraceful for the Brooks to accept such an immoral, ungrateful wolf like Arabella back into the family.”

Ashley wore a gleeful expression. Arabella had already caused enough trouble for the Hawthorns; she saw no point in pretending everything was fine because she might now bring misfortune to the Brooks.

“They even said that if it weren't for her foster father, Arabella would've starved to death. But she bit the

hand that fed her. Who's to say she won't backstab us in the future, too? Think about it. She lived with her foster parents for eight years, but how long has she been back with us?”

“Oh, and there's also this...” Ashley pulled out her cell phone and showed them a couple of videos. It was of Arabella fabricating a story about Dorian assaulting her when they were kids, and of her badmouthing her poor foster parents and cutting ties with Dorian.

She gave Judith and Scott a meaningful look. “Watch carefully. Her foster parents saved her, but look at her choosing riches over love. If it weren't for our family's wealth, she probably wouldn't have come

back.”

“Ashley!” Melissa was trying to warn her to shut up.

Chapter 159

Ashley zipped her lips this time, her objective having been accomplished. With each word she had

uttered, the countenance of the Brooks family members had darkened bit by bit.

They had already considered the possibility that Arabella was after their fortune.

"When we sent out invitations announcing the wedding of Scott, the news of his wife, Karen's departure

a day before the wedding left us flabbergasted." Timothy complained bitterly. "Our family became the

laughing stock of all Rivenwood. It seems like mother like daughter."

"Dad." Timothy's son Ronald interjected, eyeing Scott's expression and halting his father from further

comments.

Scott, with his hand supporting his temple, seemed to be lost in memories.

When Karen disappeared just before their wedding, all the Brooks were convinced she had betrayed

him. However, he had always felt that wasn't the case.

He knew that when he rescued the severely injured Karen, her background was more impressive than

he could have ever guessed. Even the Brooks' resources couldn't unearth her past.

Being the eldest son of the Brooks family, he was well-versed in the ways of the world. He knew not to involve himself with dangerous individuals.

Yet he fell in love with Karen. Despite her reluctance to discuss her past and the secrets she kept from him, he proposed to her.

And she left him without a word.

Why?

They loved each other so much. She was even pregnant with his child.

Over the years, he never gave up searching for Karen. When the news of Arabella's existence reached him, he found out that Karen had been dead for many years.

That day, he felt his heart shatter. Amid his grief, he was grateful that Karen left him their child.

He swore to treat their daughter well, to give her the best of everything, and to make her a princess to compensate for the nineteen years they lost.

But when he met Arabella for the first time, he felt distant, even when she obediently called him "Dad."

Something felt off.

Although Arabella was beautiful, there was hardly any resemblance between her, Karen, and him, except for her eyes, which bore a slight resemblance to Karen's.

Especially after hearing about Arabella's scandals in Havenwood, he realized that she had ruined her reputation there before seeking refuge at Rivenwood.

He couldn't believe the news of the shameful acts committed by a high school girl could be his and Karen's daughter.

Karen was a noble and kind woman. It was impossible for her to raise such a child.

Hence, he ordered another round of paternity tests, suspecting that Beatrice had tampered with the results.

Unfortunately, the results disappointed him. Arabella was indeed his daughter.

"Enough." Judith cut in, halting their argument. "Since we've confirmed she's a Brooks, we can't let the rumors continue. Let's find a way to salvage Arabella's reputation."

Ashley snorted disdainfully. If her high school was already abuzz with the news, how could they salvage her reputation?

But after this incident, she believed Arabella's image in the eyes of the Brooks had significantly deteriorated. When Arabella returned from Havenwood, she wouldn't be treated like a princess anymore.

After thinking of this, she couldn't help but feel gleeful.

"Also, assign more people to locate Finnian." Judith suggested with a sigh. "Since he was the one who took the child away, we have to hear his side of the story."

She, too, didn't believe that Arabella was a Brooks. Given Finnian's character, he wouldn't raise Karen's daughter in such a manner. Even if he didn't raise her, he would have entrusted her to a trustworthy person.

"Don't worry, Mom." Scott nodded.

Even if Judith didn't mention it, he would find Finnian to discover the truth about Karen's death. If she was murdered, he would avenge her.

"As for Arabella, let her stay in Havenwood for now," Judith decided. "She wanted to return there for her college entrance exam. By the time she's done, the scandal here will have died down."

She warned Scott. "Tell Tristan to keep a close eye on her. We can't afford more scandals."

Ashley burst out laughing. "Grandma, are you sure Tristan will keep an eye on her?"

She laughed, but her eyes showed her disgust.

Tristan was like a mad dog, always looking down on them, the pampered children of the Brooks family.

But when Arabella returned, he followed her around like a puppy, claiming he owed her a debt and was

willing to go through hell and high water for her.

He even got Ashley into trouble several times while helping Arabella.

Judith was well aware of Tristan's excessive compliance with Arabella. After considering Ashley's

comment, she turned to Scott, saying, "Maybe we should send someone to keep an eye on them?"

"I'll take care of it." Scott said, massaging his forehead in obvious annoyance.

"Don't let your father hear about this." Judith sternly instructed. "He's been having some heart troubles,

and the last thing he needs is stress."

Scott's father, Baron Brooks, known for his integrity, valued the Brooks family's reputation above all

else. Arabella's antics were enough to make the Brooks the laughingstock of Rivenwood, ridiculed for

welcoming such a badly behaved individual into their family.

If he found out, it was likely he would need to extend his stay at the health retreat.

"Understood."

There were no objections from the Brooks family; even Ashley nodded in agreement, though she doubted they could keep it from her grandfather for long.

Sure enough, Scott's cell phone rang just then. Everyone exchanged glances as Baron's name flashed on the screen.

Scott sighed softly and answered. "Hi Dad."

"What's going on with Arabella?" Baron's voice boomed through the speaker.

"How did you find out?" Scott sounded defeated; he had made it clear that Baron was not to know.

"Hmph! You really thought you could keep it from me?!" Baron scoffed. "The old geezer from the

Ellington family, Richard, showed up at the retreat today, pretending he wanted to play chess, but

clearly he just wanted to tell me everything!"

Scott was speechless.

He was still wondering why Richard suddenly loved to gossip when Baron added sarcastically, "Don't

you know? Arabella's foster sister is Percival's fiancée!"

Scott was speechless once again.

Well, they got themselves into trouble with someone's future daughter-in-law, so they could hardly complain.

Meanwhile, at Havenwood's Cloudcrest High School, Percival stood outside Classroom Eighteen, watching Vivienne as she managed the students' study plan for the remaining half of the month.

"Mr. Ellington, we've done some investigation." Thomas whispered to him, reporting the information his subordinates had gathered. "The daughter of the agent who went missing after a mission with 'Lark' is a senior at Cloudcrest High School. We don't know which class she's in yet."

Percival's eyes dimmed slightly as he scanned the students in Classroom Eighteen. He tilted his elegant chin, indicating Thomas to continue.

"I've checked the records of all the seniors, but the girl's records have been meticulously wiped. I couldn't find anything." Thomas admitted.

"Does the girl have any identifiable traits?" Percival asked with a hint of a frown on his face.

Chapter 160

Thomas shook his head.

"No, I've covertly checked out every student. So far, I haven't found anything unusual."

"We must continue searching." Percival's voice was gravelly. "That girl is the key to investigating what went wrong with Lark's last mission. We have to find her."

"Understood," replied Thomas. "But, during our investigation, we found out that, besides us, two other groups are also on the lookout for this girl, one being the GTO, and the other seems to be the Nine Mystics Society."

"Why on earth would the Nine Mystics Society get involved?"

The Nine Mystics Society was an incredibly ancient organization. They were shrouded in mystery and wielded enormous power; they were even more elusive than the GTO.

The people of the Nine Mystics Society seldom made their moves.

Yet this time, they were mobilizing for this girl.

"We haven't figured that out yet." Thomas shook his head. "All we know is that Lark is tangled in too many secrets."

Just then, Vivienne, who had finished setting the revision schedule for the remaining half-month and managed to settle the transfer student, Coral, heard the name "Lark" coming from Thomas.

Her eyes narrowed subtly as her gaze rested on Percival's back for a moment with a barely detectable glint in her eyes.

A moment later, she walked over. "What about Lark?"

Percival gave Thomas a look.

Thomas immediately responded. "A friend of mine has recently taken to bird-keeping and ended up with a lark, which is a protected species, and got fined."

Vivienne didn't press further. Her eyes were fleetingly scrutinizing the faces of Percival and Thomas.

"Everything arranged?" Percival asked Vivienne.

"Yes." Vivienne nodded. "We're down to the last physical education class for the seniors. When do you plan to schedule it?"

"The day after tomorrow afternoon."

With the college entrance exams just half a month away, the physical education class couldn't possibly be scheduled in the last week before the exams.

"Alright." Vivienne nodded and headed towards the staff office.

Percival followed her after a glance at Thomas, who left on his own.

The pair ascended the staircase together, bumping into Felix, who was descending with a stack of papers. They exchanged polite nods and continued on their way.

However, after Felix had walked away, he couldn't help but look back at the duo, sensing that something was off with their atmosphere, almost as if they had had a disagreement.

Indeed, Vivienne felt a bit uneasy.

Lark...

That was her mother's code-name.

Why was Percival investigating her mother?

Moreover, it seemed like they were both looking for the same person.

From the information Matthew had found and her own investigations, the girl she was looking for was indeed among the seniors at Cloudcrest High School.

But after checking and rechecking the information and even observing all the senior students, she still couldn't figure it out.

According to the information she had, the member of her mother's team who disappeared after their

last mission was very good at hiding and impersonation, often playing the role of a spy in the organization.

It seemed that he had passed on his skills to his daughter, which was why the girl was able to hide so well.

Vivienne put the files on her desk as her gaze fell on a few bags of nuts. Recalling the way Percival had playfully fed her in the morning, she felt a strange pain in her heart.

She had started to feel differently about Percival.

That was why, despite living with him for so long, she never investigated the origin of the pendant he had, as she had initially intended.

She didn't want to uncover something she didn't want to see.

Percival's kindness had indeed swayed her heart.

But after hearing the code-name "Lark" today, she felt like a bucket of cold water had been dumped on her head.

She had almost gotten lost in Percival's affection and forgotten her purpose.

Some things needed to be resolved sooner rather than later.

She and Percival needed to settle things as well.

Lifting her eyes, she looked at the stern man beside her, her lips parting slightly.

“Percival, I hope you're a friend, not a foe.”

...

At 3 a.m., a figure emerged from Vivienne's room in Bay Estates and silently made their way to the study downstairs.

The study, which she and Percival had messed up last time, had been tidied up and the broken bookshelves replaced.

Vivienne had been to this study more than once, yet she wanted to search it again.

She made her way through the room, finally stopping at the bookshelf where she had found the box with the combination lock. The box was still there.

Using her birth date to unlock the box, she found the anklet she had lost as a child still inside.

She stared at the anklet for a long while in silence, then locked the box and took it with her.

After searching the entire house, she finally stopped outside Percival's bedroom.

She inserted the key into the lock and quietly opened the door.

Inside the bedroom, Percival lay on the bed, his eyes closed in deep sleep. However, she used a mild sedative, not noticing that when she sprayed it, Percival held his breath.

She walked in and picked up Percival's phone from the bedside table. She had already checked his computer during her last use.

Now, only the phone remained unsearched.

She unlocked the phone, and when she saw the numbers displayed, she paused.

It was her birthday.

She glanced at Percival, who was still sleeping peacefully. His handsome face softened in a way that only happened when he was with her.

She took out a minicomputer, connected it to Percival's phone through the network, and copied all the content within. Even the deleted content was recovered and copied.

After she was done, she put the phone back on the bedside table and sat down in front of the floor-to-ceiling windows on Percival's bedroom balcony with the minicomputer, ready to sift through the data.

Unbeknownst to her, a faint smile danced at the corner of Percival's lips as she returned his phone.

Percival's phone screen was remarkably clean, featuring only communication apps and a lone gaming app.

Indeed, he had been persistently researching "Lark."

However, the specific reason for his investigation into her mother was nowhere to be found in the phone's contents. All she could gather was that he had been looking into her mother's last mission, just like her, and was also searching for the daughter of the team member who disappeared during that time.

A frown knitted Vivienne's brow.

Who was he, really?

Was his investigation of her mother simply to get his hands on the potion, or did he have other motives?

Her gaze landed on an innocuous health app, causing Vivienne to pause. Percival didn't seem like the type to use such an app.

She opened the app.

A smirk tugged at her lips.

So, this was where it was hidden.

The app was merely a facade. Bypassing this disguise, a dark-themed login screen appeared. Using

the login traces stolen from Percival's phone, she logged in. It required face recognition.

Torn between waking Percival for face recognition and hacking it, Vivienne chose the latter.

Then she saw a code-name, 'Wolf.'

A code-name that belonged to Percival.