

The Million-Dollar Heart

Chapter 16 Day two

Just past eight in the morning, Dorian and his family were having breakfast when his cell phone rang. The caller ID showed a number he didn't recognize. Lately, Dorian had been getting a lot of calls from unknown numbers, so he was used to it. Most of them were from companies responding to his job applications. Usually, it was something like, "Sorry, Mr. Hawthorn, you don't meet our recruitment criteria."

Dorian sighed and answered the call.

"Are you Thaddeus' father?" The person on the other end of the line asked, in a friendly tone.

"I am. Who's this?" Dorian responded, while passing Vivienne her breakfast.

"I'm the assistant principal at Imperial Blossom Nursery. We'd like to invite Thaddeus to join our school. Is that OK with you?" Dorian froze, fork in hand. After a pause, he asked, his voice shaky. "Who did you say you are?"

"I'm the assistant principal at Imperial Blossom Nursery." The voice on the other end was still friendly.

Dorian's mouth dropped open, and he jumped up excitedly. "Imperial Blossom Nursery? You mean, you want my Thaddeus to join your school?" Cordelia also jumped up, equally excited.

Vivienne just looked up and continued to enjoy her fried egg. She turned to Thaddeus, who was looking at her, passed him a piece of toast, and moved the blueberry jam in front of him, whispering, "Eat up, you're too skinny."

Thaddeus smiled at her and said politely, "Thanks, Vivienne." Dorian saw Cordelia staring at him excitedly and switched his phone to speaker mode.

"Yes, we've reviewed Thaddeus' files, and he meets our admission criteria. Do you agree to his enrollment?" The assistant principal asked, sounding a tad exasperated. Any other person, and she would not have repeated herself so many times. But this was Thaddeus! The higher-ups had personally ordered his admission. So, she had to be very patient with this.

“Agreed! Of course, agreed!” Dorian was so afraid that she would change her mind that he answered quickly and loudly.

“Then please don’t go out today. I will arrange for someone to deliver the related documents to your home.” After that, the assistant hung up.

Once the call ended, Cordelia excitedly grabbed Dorian’s arm. “Dorian, is it true? Is it really true? Thaddeus... got into Imperial Blossom Nursery?”

Oh my God! Imperial Blossom Nursery! That was a school that money couldn't buy! A school that even connections couldn't get you into!

Beatrice had tried to get Michael and Joseph's son into that nursery school but failed despite pulling many strings. Rumor had it that Joseph's son was preparing to take the entrance exam for Imperial Blossom Nursery again.

“It's true! It's true!” Dorian felt like he was dreaming. He never thought that such unbelievable good fortune would come their way

“Oh my! Vivienne is truly a lucky charm!” Cordelia was all smiles. “Ever since Vivienne came back, we've not only moved into Tranquil Estates, but Thaddeus also got into Imperial Blossom Nursery Vivienne is our family’s lucky star.”

Cordelia was so excited that she almost ran over to hug and kiss Vivienne. Sensing her intentions, Vivienne thought to herself, “Please don't! I don’t want to be kissed!”

In the afternoon.

At the Hawthorn family’s old mansion.

Beatrice sat at the head of the table, with Joseph and Michael on either side of her.

“What's going on with Dorian? Why haven't we heard anything?” Michael asked, frowning.

“It's been three days. We need to get Dorian to agree soon, or this marriage is off,” Joseph said, looking at Beatrice.

Beatrice picked up her teacup. Her gaze filled with hardship and her face grim. The nursery school principal had called her yesterday to say that their

plan had failed. The three people they had hired had been arrested, and the principal and the teacher had been fired. As the mastermind, she had to get those three out. Thankfully, not many people knew about the incident, so it didn't affect her much. But she had no idea that Vivienne was so good with computers that she could recover deleted surveillance footage.

Hadn't she been at the Emerald Monastery since she was a child? She had heard that Vivienne hadn't left there for ten years and probably hadn't been to school, so who taught her to use a computer?

"Mom! Say something! We can't let the marriage with the Ellington family slip away like this," Michael said anxiously. "Ever since Dorian refused to share the perfume formula, the company's performance has plummeted. Now, only our old customers still use our perfume. If we don't invest in researching a new formula soon, the company won't survive."

Beatrice narrowed her eyes and said in a low voice, "What's the rush? Haven't I taught you anything? You have to stay calm to succeed."

She put down her teacup and turned to Joseph. "Joseph, your relationship with Dorian is still good. Why don't you check on him?"

"He won't even answer my calls. How am I supposed to find out anything?" Joseph was irritated. He had called Dorian many times over the past few days, but Dorian never picked up. He'd tried everything, but Dorian just refused to see him. He was at his wit's end!

Right on cue, the nanny walked in. "Beatrice, there are two people at the door. They say they're from Imperial Blossom Nursery. They've brought some school admission materials"

Upon hearing this, Joseph sprung to his feet, his eyes sparkling with excitement. "Imperial Blossom Nursery? Did Andrew get in?"

Beatrice also hit up. "Quick, let them in!"

The nanny nodded and left the room.

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A moment later, she returned with two men in business suits.

As soon as they walked in, they presented their ID cards, smiling, “Hello, we’re teachers from Imperial Blossom Nursery. We’re here to deliver your admission notice and related materials.”

Beatrice nodded with a smile. Imperial Blossom Nursery sure was something else, their professionalism topped any other school. No wonder countless parents bent over backwards every year to get their kids into Imperial Blossom Nursery. There was a good reason for that.

Hearing this good news, Joseph rushed forward. “Is it my kid who got in?”

“Yes, exactly.” One of the teachers replied. “Are you Mr. Dorian? The principal specifically instructed us to hand over the materials to you personally.” Joseph was stunned. Tm Andrew Hawthorn’s father. Why should the admission notice be given to Dorian?”

The teacher paused for a moment, then continued to smile. “We’ve admitted Thaddeus. So naturally, the admission notice should be given to his father” “What?”

Beatrice, who was still sitting, along with Michael, Arabella, and Joseph, all had their eyes wide open, staring in disbelief at the two teachers

Chapter 17 The room fell into silence!

It took a long time for Joseph to regain his composure, and hurriedly asked, “Did you guys make a mistake? My son Andrew took the exam, not Thaddeus.”

The two teachers looked at each other, then opened the acceptance letter to check the name, and said seriously. “No mistake, Thaddeus is indeed the one who got admitted.”

After a pause, one of the teachers seemed to recall something and said, “Oh, Andrew, I remember him, he didn’t make it.” Even though no one physically touched him, Joseph felt as if he had just been slapped across the face in public!

How painful! How embarrassing! Thaddeus was never favored in the Hawthorn family, but was admitted to Imperial Blossom Nursery. What the hell?

Beatrice couldn't hold back anymore, stood up, and asked, "Could you please double check? Thaddeus didn't even take the exam, so how could he possibly be admitted to your school? Did you get the names mixed up?"

The two teachers, who worked at Imperial Blossom Nursery, must have had top-notch work and judgment skills. They quickly figured out what was going on and said very seriously. "Thaddeus took a special exam that the principal personally arranged for him last night. There's no mistake with his name or the acceptance letter. Please don't doubt our work."

In fact, they didn't know whether Thaddeus took the exam or not. But that was what the principal said, and the acceptance letter was personally sent by the principal. So they naturally didn't ask any further questions

"I didn't mean that."

Before Beatrice could finish her sentence, the teacher asked, "Is Dorian around? Could you call him, please?" "Why do you want that guy here? He doesn't even live here! Joseph's tone was quite rude

The teacher frowned but didn't say much. Then he took out his phone and dialed the number on the list.

Soon, the call was picked up, and the teacher immediately asked, "Hello, is this Dorian? We're here to deliver the acceptance letter. Don't you live at the Hawthorn family's house?"

After hearing something from the other end, the teacher replied, "Tranquil Estates 1601, right? Okay, we'll be right there." Upon hearing this, Beatrice and the others were shocked. Tranquil Estates? How could it be? How could they live there?

After hanging up, the two teachers prepared to leave. Arabella quickly stepped forward and said, "Are you going to see my parents? Can I go with you?"

She didn't mishear, Tranquil Estates! Why would Dorian be living in Tranquil Estates? She had to figure out what was going on. The teacher thought for a moment, then nodded. "Okay"

On the way there, Arabella still couldn't believe that Dorian could be living in Tranquil Estates. But when they entered the neighborhood, her face was filled with disbelief. She could actually get into this neighborhood.

They arrived at 1601, and Arabella was still skeptical. But a minute later, when the door opened and she saw Dorian and Cordelia, Arabella felt like her world had collapsed. Her mind was in total chaos. It wasn't until the teachers handed over the acceptance letter and left that she regained her senses.

"Dad, Mom, why are you living here?" Arabella couldn't help asking Dorian glanced at her calmly. "We rented a place here"

They didn't tell Beatrice after moving in, in order to prevent her coming here. They didn't expect such an unusual situation to occur, and yet Arabella was the first to know. Now that she knew, Beatrice would definitely find out too.

Perhaps out of nervousness, Arabella's tone unintentionally became a bit sharp. "You rented? How is that possible? This is Tranquil Estates. They don't rent out to the public."

Cordelia's face turned sour, and she said coldly. "Why not? The landlord thought we were decent people and was willing to rent us the house at a relatively low price. Is there a problem with that? Arabella, although we're not your biological parents, we did take care of you for a few years. Can you not stand us living a slightly better life?"

Arabella turned pale. 7,1 didn't mean that...

Cordelia glanced at her, didn't bother with her anymore, but didn't ask her to leave either. After all, she was a child they had raised. Although Arabella had disappointed them over the years, there were still some feelings left.

She turned around and put away the acceptance letter. Even though it was just a kindergarten, the acceptance letter from Imperial Blossom Nursery was indeed prestigious.

Dorian didn't say anything else, he just went back to the couch and continued watching TV

Arabella glanced inside the house. Vivienne and Thaddeus were playing with toys on the balcony, Dorian was watching TV, and Cordelia, after tidying things up, went to join Vivienne and Thaddeus on the balcony.

The scene was peaceful and full of warmth. This was the kind of family life she had always envied. When Dorian first adopted her, she also had such warm feelings, but unfortunately, as time went on, her mindset changed

Arabella bit her lip lightly, walked over to the couch, and sat down, speaking softly, “Dad, Thaddeus got into Imperial Blossom Nursery. I should be happy for you, but have you considered the fact that the tuition for this kindergarten is very high and you're currently out of work? Can you afford Thaddeus tuition?”

Dorian’s hand holding his cup paused, then he looked up at her and asked, “What are you trying to say?”

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Arabella put on a sweet and sensible act. To ensure Thaddeus’ education is funded and stable, you should agree to the marriage with Mr. Ellington. After all, with the support from the Ellington family, the tuition would be no issue.”

Dorian scoffed, “So what you’re saying is, I should sell my daughter off to cover my son’s tuition?”

Arabella bit her lip, saying nothing

Dorian was deeply disappointed. “Arabella, when I brought you home, things were tough. But your mother and I persisted, even if we had to endure hardship, we wouldn't let you suffer. I might not be some big shot, but I’d never trade my own child for so— called glory. Do you understand?”

“Dad, I...” Arabella was about to say something, but Dorian cut her off. “Alright, we’re heading out, you should go home.”

Arabella’s hand unconsciously clenched. She sneered inwardly. Though they claimed to treat her as their own, they're leaving the house, and she’s being told to go home. They’d never considered her part of the family. She didn’t say another word, turning to leave.

After she left, Dorian set his teacup on the table and let out a deep sigh. Cordelia, watching this, asked, "What happened? Why the sigh?"

Dorian replied, "Arabella was right. Even though Thaddeus has been accepted, the tuition is too expensive. We need so much money per year. Now my mother's meddling, and I can't find work in Havenwood. I don't know what to do."

Cordelia sighed as well, not responding

Vivienne, who had just finished helping Thaddeus with the last piece of his puzzle, looked up at them and slowly said, "Don't worry. I can work and support you guys."

Dorian's mood lightened up, and he laughed. "Alright, then, I'll rely on you" Vivienne smiled, "Okay." Then she said, "I'll look for work on social media."

Having said that, she took out her phone and made her first social media update ever. "Looking for a job. Hope someone can help me."

After sending the update, she put her phone away. Little did she know that her phone was about to be bombarded with messages after her update.

Chapter 18 Inside the old Hawthorn family manor.

Arabella rushed back to the house, barely steady on her feet. She blurted out, "Granny, Dad has rented a house, and it's in Tranquil Estates!"

"What?" Beatrice, Michael, and Joseph all shot up from their seats, their faces showing utter disbelief as they stared at Arabella.

Beatrice was the first to recover, barely keeping her surprise under control. "Are you sure? Tranquil Estates doesn't usually rent to outsiders."

Arabella looked serious. "I asked the security staff in the residential area. They did rent it, and the rent is ridiculously low. It's practically a giveaway"

Beatrice stayed silent, her eyebrows furrowed. After a while, she said, "Michael, look into who the landlord of that house is. No matter what it takes, we need to drive them out. The engagement deadline the Ellington family gave us is approaching fast. We can't afford any mistakes"

Michael responded, "I'm on it."

Arabella frowned slightly. After a pause, she said, "Grandma, I have an idea, but....."

"What idea? Let's hear it," Beatrice asked quickly.

Arabella leaned in to whisper in Beatrice's ear. A smile spread across Beatrice's face. "Good, that's a good idea. Let's do that." "But isn't this a bit unfair to Vivienne?" Arabella hesitated

"Who cares what she thinks? She's just a nobody to me. If this marriage falls through, what does Vivienne have to do with the Hawthorn family?" A cold glint flashed in Beatrice's eyes.

"I'll follow your lead then." Arabella lowered her head, a sly smile flickering in her eyes. But no one saw it.

Vivienne got up early to go jogging. It was something she'd been doing for ten years. Just as she got to the entrance of the residential area, she ran into Arabella and her two classmates, who were invited over to someone's house.

Upon seeing Vivienne, Arabella immediately walked up to her. "Vivienne? What are you doing here?" Vivienne gave her a nonchalant glance. "What's up?" What was this girl up to now? Didn't she already know they lived here?

"No, nothing" Arabella feigned fear of Vivienne, whispering, "I thought you guys were staying at a motel? How did you end up here?"

"Oh, I live here." Vivienne replied, amused. She decided to play along with Arabella's game.

"What?" Arabella was taken aback by Vivienne's cooperation, but she quickly recovered. "You mean, you're living here? Vivienne, do you know what place this is?"

Vivienne raised an eyebrow. "Tranquil Estates?"

"Do you know that outsiders aren't allowed in Tranquil Estates?" Arabella chuckled. "Vivienne, I know you just moved to the city and everything is new to you, but this is not the place for you. You better leave before someone loses something valuable and you get blamed"

Vivienne smirked, "So where do you want me to go?" "Aren't you guys staying at a motel? You should just go back there," Arabella suggested casually. Before Vivienne could respond, one of the girls next to Arabella blurted out, "Arabella, who is she?"

The girl who spoke was Coral, the daughter of the Lockwood family. Though the Lockwoods weren't as prominent as the Hawthorns in Havenwood, they still held a significant status, and Coral's two brothers were both politicians.

Arabella didn't like Coral, but she couldn't ignore the Lockwood family "She's my sister" Arabella replied.

"So, she's the country girl." Coral laughed, covering her mouth. "Look at her clothes. They probably cost less than fifty bucks total. Arabella, you're like night and day compared to her"

Arabella lowered her gaze and whispered, "Coral, don't talk like that. She's still my sister, and I'm just an adopted daughter of the Hawthorn family."

"What's wrong with being adopted?" Coral retorted immediately. "Even if you're adopted, the Hawthorns prefer you. You're so outstanding, why wouldn't they? And what if she's the daughter of your family? She's still been driven out, hasn't she?"

The other girl chimed in, "Yeah, you're famously talented in Havenwood. How could you be compared to a country girl?"

Vivienne shoved her hands into her pockets, slanting her eyes at them with a smirk. Were these people here to stir up trouble on purpose?

"But didn't your adoptive father get kicked out of the Hawthorn family? How did she get into the residential area?" Coral demanded.

Arabella sighed and defended Vivienne. "Maybe she saw how luxurious the neighborhood was and wanted to look around."

She then turned to Vivienne and advised, "Vivienne, once you finish sightseeing, please leave. This is not a place everyone can just enter. If someone loses something, it'll be hard to explain"

Vivienne stood there, hands in her pockets, watching her with amusement.

Arabella felt a bit jittery under her gaze. It was as if she could see right through her. Could she have figured out why she was here? No way! Vivienne was just a girl who grew up in the Emerald Monastery. She'd supposedly been living there for the past decade. There was no way she could read her like a book

"You snuck in here?" Coral snapped. "That's not cool! I need to check if anything's missing from my house"

With that said, she whipped out her phone and dialed a number 15.51

"Coral, don't overreact. There's probably a misunderstanding. Vivienne's not like that. If you get the security involved and she ends up at the police station, her reputation is toast!" Arabella protested, but her eyes were twinkling with mirth.

Vivienne glanced at her, a hint of ice in her gaze. So that was the game she wanted to play?

"Arabella, you can't be too naive!" Coral shook off her hand, raising her voice. "She's a thief, and she didn't steal something trivial. She stole something worth tens of thousands of dollars. That's a one-way ticket to jail"

Arabella opened her mouth, but then fell silent. They were standing not far from the main entrance, and two security guards rushed over after hearing the commotion

"Ms. Lockwood, what seems to be the problem?" One of them asked

They both recognized Coral. In fact, they knew all the homeowners here.

Coral huffed, "Is your security system that bad? How can you just let anyone waltz in here?" She pointed at Vivienne. "She stole my mom's bracelet."

The security guards turned to look at Vivienne, doing a double-take, "Ms. Hawthorn?"

They hadn't noticed Vivienne since she had been standing behind Coral. Now that they noticed her, their voices wavered a bit.

Chapter 19

Other people might not have known, but they did. Ms. Hawthorn was the new owner of No. 1601. And anyone who could buy this house at three times the market price within a few hours, wasn't your average Joe.

On top of that, the manager had specifically told them not to reveal that Ms. Hawthorn was the owner. They could only say that the resident of No.1601 was a tenant. The manager kept emphasizing not to stir up trouble, so they chose to zip it.

At first, they didn't know Vivienne, but because she frequently came and went around the neighborhood, the security gradually recognized her. And now Coral was calling Vivienne a thief?

The security immediately furrowed his brows. "You guys got it all wrong, right? Ms. Hawthorn is a tenant here" "What?" Coral's eyes widened, she couldn't believe what the security was saying, "Tenant?" Arabella had known all along that the security would say this, so she just smirked without a word. The security nodded. "Yes"

"Are you kidding me? Tranquil Estates never rents out to outsiders, the people here are all high-profile, so how could they rent a house to someone like her? If anything goes wrong, who's gonna take responsibility?" Coral was fuming. She felt that she was born noble. She looked down on common folks, especially those from poor backgrounds like Vivienne. Living in the same neighborhood with a country bumpkin, she felt extremely uncomfortable. The security's face changed. They were used to being looked down upon and even insulted by the rich folks living here. Only Vivienne and her family were always very polite to them. A few times, Mrs. Hawthorn had even brought them ice cream and cold water when the weather was hot. Although it wasn't worth much, it made them feel very comfortable. Hearing Coral's words, the security couldn't help but defend Vivienne, "Ms. Hawthorn's lease is in order. The fact that the owner is willing to rent the house to them shows that they trust Ms. Hawthorn's character. Ms. Lockwood, if there's nothing else, we gotta get back to work."

"No way!" Coral yelled. "She stole my mom's bracelet. You guys call the cops!"

The security was a bit helpless. Would someone who could afford to buy a house with such a large sum of money steal a bracelet?

“Do you have any evidence?” The security asked professionally.

“If I had evidence, why would I need you guys?” Coral snapped. “The people in this neighborhood have been living here for a long time, and only Vivienne just moved in. My mom’s bracelet went missing as soon as she moved in, so I have every reason to suspect her

The security didn’t know what to say. According to the rules, if the owner lost something, they should indeed help investigate. But Vivienne’s identity was special, they couldn’t reveal it, so they didn’t know how to handle it

The security looked at Vivienne. She was about to say something when someone said, ‘Coral, why aren’t you home What are you doing here?’

Coral saw who it was and immediately ran over excitedly, pointing at Vivienne and said, “Jaylan, she stole mom’s bracelet, I want the security to call the cops, but they don’t seem willing to do it”

“Oh? Really?” Jaylan, Coral’s brother, glanced at the security with a rather authoritative look

The security was rigid. Jaylan was a big shot in Havenwood, as the captain of the police station, he was efficient and decisive. If they pissed him off, it would be a disaster.

Just when the security was at a loss, Jaylan’s stern voice rang out. “If you stole something, you should be punished by the law.” With that, he said to the two people behind him, “Take her back for investigation.

Hearing this, Arabella grinned. Vivienne being caught stealing would definitely make headlines. From now on, Vivienne wouldn’t pose any threat to her

The two uniformed men next to Jaylan walked up to Vivienne and said sternly, “Please come with us!

Vivienne looked up at them, a smirk on her face. “Are you sure you want to take me away before things are cleared up?” “We just want to take you to the station for questioning”

Vivienne’s face was expressionless, but her tone was calm. “Are you sure? Once I’m in, I might not come out.”

Coral laughed, “Are you okay? What do you think the police station is? You can come and go as you please? Stealing valuable property, you better be prepared to stay in jail for a long time.”

Vivienne raised an eyebrow Alright, let’s go.”

As soon as they walked out of the neighborhood gate, Vivienne’s phone rang. She was about to answer the phone when the law enforcement officer said sternly, “Please hand over your phone. You can’t have any contact with the outside world until things are cleared up.”

Vivienne glanced at them, a hint of chill on her face. “Am I being charged with murder?”

“This is the procedure, so please cooperate. The law enforcement officer answered professionally. “We’ll answer your phone and notify your family”

Vivienne smirked and threw the phone to the officer. “Take it” With that, she gave them an intense look and walked away

Behind her, Vivienne’s phone kept ringing. The law enforcement officer answered the phone and said sternly. “This is Havenwood Police Station. Vivienne is suspected of theft and has been taken back to the police station for investigation”

Matthew on the other end of the phone stared at the suddenly hung up call, it took him a while to react.

Stealing? Police station? Investigation?

Were they out of their minds!

Matthew quickly checked his contacts and made several calls. The content of each call was the same. “Vivienne was taken away by the Havenwood Police. She’s being accused of theft.”

On the other hand, Jaylan, who had ordered Vivienne to be taken away, had no idea that his action had caused a stir in the whole of Havenwood

12:52 The Hawthorn family.

After Vivienne was taken away, Arabella came back and immediately spilled the beans to Beatrice, “Gran, Vivienne got nabbed for swiping Ms.

Lockwood's mom's bracelet. The engagement with the Ellington family might be off. Should we inform them?"

If the Ellington family got wind of Vivienne's sticky fingers, they'd definitely call off the wedding. In that case, she wouldn't have to worry about Vivienne not wanting to tie the knot and having her step in.

"What? Pinching stuff?" Michael exclaimed, fuming. "I knew that Vivienne was no good. Now, she's landed with the Hawthorn family in hot water. I bet the Ellington family would call off the engagement."

Beatrice took a sip of her tea, nonchalantly saying. "This might actually be a blessing in disguise"

Joseph asked, puzzled, "Mom, how on earth could this be a good thing? If the Ellington family calls off the wedding with the Hawthorn family, our investment would go down the drain. That's a massive loss for us."

Joseph still couldn't wrap his head around it and continued, "Regardless, the marriage could at least bring in investment. Our company is up the creek without a paddle now, and no one wants to shell out for us."

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"It's just a small hiccup in our investment plans. As long as we prevent Arabella from marrying Percival, there will be other opportunities."

Beatrice glanced up, her eyes full of shrewdness. She forced Vivienne to marry Percival not merely because of the Ellington family's investment. More importantly, it was to protect Arabella.

Arabella was her carefully nurtured protégé. She had poured a lot of human and financial resources to mold Arabella into the well-known talent she was in Havenwood today. In the future, the benefits Arabella could bring to the Hawthorn family were substantial. She would never let Arabella marry Percival. Therefore, even if through marriage, the benefits the Ellington family could bring to the Hawthorn family, it was just a small fry compared to Arabella, who was a more stable investment

She was worried that the marriage contract with the Ellington family would face problems, thus she forced Vivienne to get engaged to Percival. Vivienne's theft was a disgrace to a prestigious family, and the Ellington family naturally wouldn't want her anymore.

The engagement would naturally be cancelled, saving them the trouble of bringing Vivienne back. This was also the reason why she supported Arabella's plan.

Beatrice pondered for a moment, then said to Arabella, "Go to the media and expose this." Arabella was startled. "But doing this will also have a big impact on our family."

The Hawthorn family's daughter was a thief. How would outsiders view the Hawthorn family? This seemed to be a lose-lose situation.

"It's okay, her mother took her away from our family, so we are the victims." Beatrice sat on her expensive custom chair, and her eyes were showing a hint of indifference.

Arabella was stunned for a moment, then laughed. "I understand, Grandma." At the Havenwood police station.

Vivienne was slouched in the interrogation chair, her long slender legs crossed. On the table in front of her was a phone that the law enforcement officers had forcefully shoved but couldn't get rid of.

In the quiet interrogation room, the phone was ringing non-stop. The two law enforcement officers that brought her in were sweating, extremely nervous. Seeing her not answering the phone, one of them gently persuaded, "Ms. Hawthorn, this phone has been ringing for a while, why don't you answer it?"

Vivienne glanced up, and a sarcastic and confident smile showed on her lips. "Sorry, I always abide by the law. I remember the police saying I must surrender my phone to assist in your investigation."

The law enforcement officers were at a loss for words. They felt like crying.

In accordance with normal procedures, they really didn't have any problem. Vivienne was reported for theft, and it was a valuable item. They brought the suspect back for questioning and confiscated her phone, all within normal procedures, they didn't give Vivienne a hard time.

But as soon as they brought Vivienne back to the station, the phone in the chief's office rang. Since Jaylan wasn't there, they answered it.

The result-scared them half to death!

More than a dozen calls in a row, all from their superiors, all asked if they had arrested a woman named Vivienne. After telling the truth, they were severely scolded and told to let her go. But when he was about to let Vivienne go, she wouldn't leave. She just sat there, and no amount of persuasion could get her to leave.

They had no choice but to call their superiors and report Vivienne's situation. Their superior asked them to hand the phone to Vivienne, but she adamantly refused to answer the phone.

The law enforcement officer awkwardly chuckled. "We have already investigated and found out that you did not steal Ms. Lockwood's mother's bracelet. You can go home now. We have other work to do, and it's not very convenient for us to carry out other work with you here."

"I find it quite nice here, very quiet." Vivienne leaned back in her chair and said casually, "I did steal Ms. Lockwood's mother's bracelet. Why don't you check again? You might have missed some useful evidence."

The law enforcement officer didn't know what to do. Who would stay in an interrogation room and refuse to leave? However, the main problem was that if she insisted on not leaving, they would not be able to explain to their superior

At the hospital.

After Percival and Isolde finished eating. Thomas hurried in. He glanced at Eartha and Isolde, then walked to Percival and whispered, "Ms. Hawthorn has been arrested" Percival suddenly looked up, his eyes sharp. "What happened?"

"Half an hour ago, the media reported that the Hawthorn family's young lady was taken away by the Havenwood police for stealing a fifty-dollar bracelet... Thomas told Percival about the investigation.

Percival's face darkened. He pushed his wheelchair and left. "To the police station." Tranquil Estates, the Lockwood family's residence.

Arabella took a sip of the water Coral poured, her eyes instantly becoming dark. "Coral, did Vivienne really steal your mother's bracelet?"

"My mother's bracelet wasn't lost at all. I said that on purpose." Coral laughed.

"What?" Arabella's face was full of disbelief. "Why...why would you do that?"

For you," Coral said. "I noticed you've been down lately, and I figured it's because of this country bumpkin from the Hawthorn family, right?"

Chapter

Arabella didn't say anything, she just pursed her lips lightly.

I reckon she must've taken you for a ride, so this time, I wanna teach her a lesson."

Arabella gripped Coral's hand, tears swirling in her eyes. "Coral, I'm really touched that you'd go to bat for me like this, but I still want to plead on behalf of my sister. Please ask your brother to let her go. She's a missy from the Hawthorn family, after all, and the Hawthorns have done me a solid."

"You're too kind," Coral said, somewhat disgruntled. "People like Vivienne deserve a good kick in the pants. Just because she's from the Hawthorn family doesn't mean she can walk all over you."

She paused, then said, "But don't sweat it. There's no proof to begin with. In a couple of days, I'll have a word with my brother. Once we 'find the bracelet, she'll be sprung from the cop shop."

Arabella was crestfallen. She'd hoped that Vivienne would be stuck in the slammer forever But it was all good. At least this incident would put the kibosh on the marriage between the Ellington and Hawthorn families.

Jaylan was in his study, sorting out some work. His phone rang. He glanced at the caller ID and promptly answered with respect, "Herman."

"Are you outta your damn mind?!" The call barely connected before angry words flew from the other end. Jaylan was taken aback. "What's going on, Herman? Why are you so mad?"

“How dare you ask me what’s wrong? Is this how you always handle cases? You simply haul people into the station without a shred of evidence? Is this your standard operating procedure? Sort this mess out right away, or you’re out! Don’t bother showing up at the station anymore!” The voice at the other end of the line hurled a few more angry words and then hung up.