

Million-Dollar 201

Chapter 201

As soon as their guests came inside, Dorian and Cordelia realized that their pile of luggage was still in the living room and immediately felt a bit awkward. "We apologize. We've just moved in and haven't had the chance to tidy up yet."

"Let me help you." Jerry quickly stepped forward, grabbing the biggest suitcase there before Dorian could react. "Where should I put it?"

Dorian and Cordelia were taken aback. Who wouldn't feel embarrassed after watching a guest do their work?

Before they could even utter a word of refusal, the other eight men rushed forward, each grabbing a piece of luggage until everything was taken. It almost looked like a heist.

"Don't be shy with us." Daniel picked up a large box filled with Thaddeus' toys with a smile as bright as the sunshine on a summer's day. "Vivienne's parents are like our own, so please feel free to ask us for help."

"Oh, well, thank you..." Dorian nodded, still feeling a bit stunned. However, when he saw that even Dawson was picking up a big bag, he quickly tried to stop him. "Mr. Dawson, you really shouldn't."

“Don’t worry, I’ve been sitting too much in the office, so now my back’s starting to ache. This will be a good chance to stretch.” Dawson chuckled while holding onto the bag.

Cordelia and Dorian exchanged glances. She was beginning to suspect that Dawson, the chairman of Alliance Enterprises, might be a bit too eccentric.

Since these men were enthusiastically helping, Dorian and Cordelia realized that they couldn’t refuse.

So they let them handle all the luggage.

After everything was sorted, Dorian and Cordelia quickly offered the nine men some coffee in the living room.

Dawson gave Jerry a look as the hot coffee was served.

Jerry understood and turned to Dorian and Cordelia. “We kinda forgot to book a hotel when we came here. Could we stay here for a few days?”

The couple looked at the eight men, who were still sweaty from the work they had just done. They hadn’t even rolled down their sleeves yet. How could they say no?

This villa was only temporary for them, so they turned back to Dawson. “Mr. Dawson, what do you

think?”

Dawson was pleased. He was waiting for this question and smiled. “Of course, that’s fine.”

Dorian sighed in relief, but then Dawson added, “I’ve taken quite a liking to Vivienne’s eight younger disciples. And I’ve never experienced living at Jade Garden Residences before, so why don’t I also stay here for a few days to chat more with them?”

“Ah?” Dorian was taken aback. He wondered how a simple model house experience turned into a collective sleepover. But Dawson was his boss; he even owned the villa they were currently standing in.

How could he refuse?

Of course, he couldn’t, so he just reluctantly nodded.

Now that Dorian and Cordelia had given the okay for these men to stay, Dawson was now in a great mood and immediately declared, “I’ll take the room on the left of your daughter’s.”

“I’ll take the one on the right.” Daniel quickly claimed.

Jerry stared down at the other eager men and said seriously, “Then I’ll take the one across from Vivienne.”

"I'll take the one next to Jerry." Brian quickly said.

"I'll take the one on the other side of Jerry." Donald quickly spoke before Gary could.

The Hawthorns would be staying on the third floor, and Vivienne's room was on the second floor, which had a total of six rooms. They were all taken now.

Gary glared at Donald and had no choice but to say, "Then I'll take the one above Vivienne's room."

Eric and Larry, who were slower to claim a room, had to choose one on the third floor. The last room was taken by Leopold.

Dorian and Cordelia watched, feeling completely dumbfounded, as the nine men divided up the rooms in the villa.

Vivienne must have quite a bond with her eight younger disciples for them to want rooms so close to hers.

But why was Dawson joining in?

Once the rooms were assigned, the nine men immediately called to have their luggage delivered and moved into their respective rooms.

After arranging his own room, Dawson wandered into Vivienne's bedroom next door.

Vivienne's room was north-facing. It had excellent lighting and ventilation and a large balcony filled with blooming flowers.

Every piece of furniture in the room was handpicked by the nine disciples and flown in overnight, all to win Vivienne's favor.

To ensure that Dorian and Cordelia would assign this second-floor room to Vivienne, the nine men had gone to great lengths to persuade the couple.

Dawson whistled as he stepped onto the balcony to take a look around.

Jade Garden Residences was located on high ground, and from the balcony, you could see the nearby Jewel Park.

Pleased with the view, he returned to the room and saw that Vivienne's suitcase was still on the floor.

With time on his hands, Dawson decided to help her sort her clothes into the wardrobe.

As he was humming and unpacking the suitcase, a piece of pink fabric with a strawberry cake pattern slipped out.

He picked it up, and his face turned crimson.

"What are you doing?" Jerry's voice suddenly echoed from the doorway.

Dawson jumped and jolted. He almost dropped the item in his hand.

He turned around to see Jerry and Daniel standing at the door, both looking quite shocked.

"I never knew you had such peculiar tastes. Are you really stealing Vivienne's underwear?" Daniel's

hand trembled as he pointed at Dawson.

"What? The fifth disciple swiped Vivienne's panties?!" Donald, hearing the commotion, exclaimed and

pushed his way to the door.

"What color are Vivienne's panties?" Brian curiously craned his neck to see, only to be met with a

collective scornful gaze from everyone. It seemed like they were accusing him of being a pervert.

"No, no, it's a misunderstanding. A serious misunderstanding..." Dawson quickly waved his hands,

frantically trying to explain that he was just helping Vivienne pack her things.

At that moment, a chilly voice came from the doorway. "What are you all doing?"

Dawson, still holding the strawberry-printed panties, met Vivienne's puzzled gaze. In an instant, his

face turned deathly pale.

Percival stood behind Vivienne. His eyes, upon landing on the item in Dawson's hand, filled with murderous intent in a heartbeat.

"Vivienne, let me plead... I mean, let me explain." Dawson stammered.

Vivienne cracked her knuckles, and amid the echoing sounds, Jerry and the others instinctively made way.

Dawson, upon seeing the furious Vivienne advance, took a step back. "Vivienne, these pieces of furniture were carefully selected by all of us. It would be such a waste to break them."

Without uttering a word, Vivienne silently walked in.

Daniel, considerate as ever, closed the door behind her.

Dawson's screams could be heard from the room, but they quickly faded into a whisper.

Daniel, unfazed, provocatively looked at Percival outside the door. "Now that you've brought Vivienne back, you can leave."

"Leave?" Percival didn't pay heed to Daniel's provocation. "Nobody told you that I'm staying here?"

"Stay here?" Daniel scoffed. "Too bad. There's no room for you here."

Percival's brow furrowed.

Daniel, being "kind," pointed out the obvious to him. "This one's mine, that one's Jerry's, that one's

Dawson's, and the one next to it..."

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Percival's face grew colder the more he listened. From the moment he heard Dorian mention the villa,

he had a feeling something was off. As he suspected, it was these annoying men who were up to no

good. They took advantage of his absence to claim all the rooms next to Vivienne's bedroom.

Upon hearing the commotion, Dorian and Cordelia came down from the third floor.

After seeing Percival, Dorian and Cordelia paused, only then remembering that Percival was supposed

to live with them.

However, they had completely forgotten, and all the rooms on the second and third floors had been

taken.

"Um..." Dorian glanced around before hesitantly proposing to Percival. "Percival, would you mind taking

a room on the first floor?"

Percival lifted his eyes and smirked. His cold gaze swept over the seven men in the hallway, finally

landing on Leopold, who was cowering behind Eric. "I'll take his room."

Jerry and the others immediately turned their attention to Leopold. They were threatening him with their

gazes, hinting that if he agreed, they would make him pay.

Leopold lamented in his heart as he wondered why he had to be stuck in the middle of this mess.

However, now that he was facing Percival's mocking gaze, even though he found the eight elder

disciples terrifying, he realized that if he didn't agree, Percival would surely make him suffer. So he

chuckled nervously. "I'm afraid of heights. I'll go to the first floor."

Jerry and the others' gazes immediately turned murderous, blatantly accusing Leopold of being a

traitor.

Leopold could only pretend not to see them. He slipped upstairs to pack his things, hoping to avoid the

battleground that was the second floor.

As soon as he entered his room, someone grabbed his collar from behind.

Percival's icy voice echoed in his ear. "Did you have fun tearing down my houses?"

Leopold trembled; he nearly fell to his knees. He turned around and stammered, "Percival, they forced

me. You don't know how terrifying other eight elder disciples are..."

"Oh?" Percival chuckled coldly. "They're scary, but I'm not? There's a hardcore training program specifically designed for newcomers at the bureau. How about you lead the team?"

"Please no!" Leopold's hair stood on end, and he fell to his knees. He was truly begging at this point.

He clung to Percival's legs, pleading, "Percival, that training lasts several months! And with all that's going on right now, how can you manage to deal with them without me, your handsome and capable sidekick?"

The hardcore training program, commonly referred to as 'Hell Training' at the bureau, was Percival's twisted version of the original program.

They had all endured this brutal training to become official members of the team who were eligible for assignments.

The original training was designed by Lark and was so brutal that it was dubbed 'Devil Training.'

Those few months of testing were a living nightmare. Out of a thousand participants, fewer than thirty passed, demonstrating just how twisted the training was.

But Percival, this sadist, wasn't satisfied after enduring the 'Devil Training.'

He took over Lark's team and proposed to the bureau to revise the training, adding several extreme

tests and transforming the Devil Training into Hell Training.

Numerous newcomers at the bureau cried out in pain because of this and cursed Percival behind his back.

He had barely survived the 'Devil Training,' so how could he willingly undergo the more terrifying 'Hell Training'?

"Hmm." Percival sneered, kicking Leopold away. "You think I want you around to annoy me?"

"No, not at all. I'm the most considerate person in the world. How could I annoy you?" Leopold tried to approach him again.

Percival coldly avoided him and looked at him with a mocking expression, as if to say, 'Do you really believe what you're saying?'

"Percival..." Leopold was on the verge of tears. "Please give me a chance to redeem myself."

Percival responded, "Get rid of the eight men."

For Vivienne's sake, he could tolerate them trashing his room, but he wouldn't tolerate them trying to take Vivienne's attention from him.

"Uh..." Leopold hesitated as he thought about the elder disciples. But after seeing Percival's cold gaze, he immediately agreed. "Sure, sure. I'll make sure it happens. But..."

Percival's softened expression stiffened again, as Leopold hastily added, "But they are not ordinary people. We should take them down one by one."

"Oh?" Percival leaned back on the leather couch as he crossed his long legs and raised an eyebrow at Leopold. "How do we take them down one at a time?"

"Hehehe." Leopold chuckled, leaned in, and whispered, "Jerry likes to paint, Daniel's afraid of cats, Eric loves tea, and the fifth elder disciple..."

Percival gave him a cold glance. "By your method, wouldn't we be wasting a lot of time?"

Leopold looked like he was about to cry. "This is the best method I can think of. Otherwise, it won't be easy to get rid of them."

"Heh!" Percival smirked. "Is that so?"

...

On the first floor.

When Vivienne came down after reprimanding Dawson, she saw Percival and her other eight disciples

sitting across from each other on the couches in the living room, engaged in a standoff.

Jerry and the others glared at Percival with distaste.

Though Percival was alone, he didn't lose an ounce of his daunting aura as he nonchalantly faced off against them.

Dorian and Cordelia watched helplessly as the situation unfolded. The moment they sat down, the atmosphere turned tense.

Eric scoffed at Percival. He expertly boiled water and brewed tea using the tea set on the table, then served it to everyone.

Although many of them usually drank coffee, it was nice to try the world-renowned teas made in various countries all over the world.

"Dorian, Cordelia, the Queen's Court tea I brought today is the best tea available locally. Please have a taste."

Eric's words were directed at Dorian and Cordelia, but his eyes were fixed on Percival. He cast him a challenging gaze as he slid a cup towards him.

Percival gave him a slight smile. He lifted his cup of tea for a sip and praised it. "Rich and lingering. A fine tea indeed."

Well, Queen's Court tea was bound to be a delicious and aromatic drink.

Just when Eric was about to bask in his victory, the doorbell rang.

Cordelia rose to answer the door, ushering in Thomas, who was cradling a box.

"Percival, your item is here." Thomas said as he approached Percival.

With a slight nod from Percival, Thomas immediately placed the box on the table, unveiling a complete tea set.

A carved tea set was laid out on the table. It was polished from jadeite, so the white and green contrast made it particularly pleasing to the eye.

Eric's eyes nearly popped out of his skull once he saw the carved tea set. This set was a masterpiece from the home of the world's best tea masters. It was crafted by the renowned artisan Yacob. It had fetched a staggering billion dollars at an auction in M State last year.

Eric was astounded to learn that Percival was the one who had snatched it from him at the auction.

Upon seeing the tea leaves brought by Thomas, Eric gasped. "This... This is..."

Percival took the tea leaves from Thomas and elegantly brewed the tea with the spring water that

Thomas had brought.

"These are harvested from the eighteen tea plants from the Royal Tea Garden. Only two ounces are produced each year. They are priceless and rare."

"There's no way you're using such a valuable antique tea set to make tea?!" Eric watched as Percival placed the tea leaves and boiling water into the carved tea set.

His eyes were nearly bulging out of their sockets, and his face was a picture of heartache. "What a waste!"

There were only two of Yacob's tea sets in existence. If it were to be damaged, it would be a loss for all of mankind.

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With a nonchalant expression on his face, Percival pushed a cup of freshly brewed tea towards Eric.

"Tea sets are meant for making tea, aren't they?"

"But this is an antique! An antique!" Eric glared at Percival in resentment, but he couldn't resist picking up the cup of tea and taking a sip.

The delicate and distinctive fragrance of the tea almost made him sigh in contentment.

He had been longing for this tea, which was produced by the eighteen tea plants in the Royal Tea Garden.

However, its annual yield was only about 50 grams, and even before the leaves were picked, they were already ordered by the big shots. He didn't even have the chance to get a whiff of its aroma.

Unexpectedly, it was Percival, the man he currently despised the most, who had made this dream come true.

As he savored the tea, he carefully admired the intricately carved cup in his hand.

The small cup was adorned with stories related to tea. It told stories of its cultivation, picking, processing, selling, brewing, and serving. All expertly carved by Yacob.

It was a one-of-a-kind masterpiece, making whatever set he had look like junk in comparison.

Such a precious item should be stored in a safe and admired, shouldn't it?

But this infuriating man had just casually brought it out for use.

Vivienne couldn't help but laugh at the sight of Eric's jealous face. He looked like he wanted to bite Percival to death.

"Vivienne." As soon as Vivienne came down, Dorian and Cordelia hurriedly called her over.

"Do they have a grudge against Percival?" Cordelia asked in a low voice.

From their perspective, it seemed like the men were just making tea, but it felt like they were on the verge of a fight.

Vivienne smiled and patted Cordelia's back to reassure her.

"Vivienne, come and sit here." Jerry and the others immediately made room for her as soon as they saw her.

Before Vivienne could react, Percival stood up, took her hand, and led her to sit next to him. He raised his eyebrows at the eight disgruntled faces across from them.

He then brewed another cup of tea for Vivienne and handed it to her. He glanced disdainfully at Eric's useless tea set and said scornfully, "Next time, keep this trash to yourself."

It was just round one, but Eric was utterly defeated.

Jerry and the other men exchanged glances and pulled out a long box that had been by their side.

They took out a scroll from the box and handed it to Dorian.

With Brian's help, Jerry unrolled the scroll, revealing a stunning landscape painting.

"Dorian, Cordelia, we weren't sure what to bring as a gift for our visit, so we prepared a painting by

Gustaf, the most famous painter our country has ever had, titled 'Thousand Hills in Late Snow.'"

Dorian and Cordelia gasped in surprise as they looked at the painting. They had seen this famous

painting in the news before. It was said to have been auctioned for a staggering 3 billion dollars. It was

bought by a mysterious buyer, who turned out to be Jerry.

Just now, the extravagant tea and tea sets had already made Dorian and Cordelia feel like they were

on pins and needles. Now, Jerry was presenting them with this priceless painting as a gift.

They were so stunned that they forgot to refuse the gift.

Were all the disciples of the Emerald Monastery this rich? They couldn't help but wonder.

"Huh." Percival glanced at the painting and sneered at Jerry. "Jerry, I heard that you were a

connoisseur of great paintings. How come you didn't realize that this painting is a fake?"

"Mr. Ellington, if you don't understand art, don't talk nonsense." Jerry's face turned cold. "This painting

by Gustaf has been appraised by several domestic experts."

"They are just self-proclaimed experts." Percival said dismissively. "There are plenty of cases where

ignorant experts have ruined precious antiques."

"Isn't it you who is pretending to know anything about art?" Jerry retorted coldly. "You say this painting is a fake, but do you have any proof?"

"The silk used in this painting," Percival pointed at the painting. "This type of silk only started being produced 40 years ago. How could Gustaf make this when he died nearly 80 years ago?"

Jerry's face turned pale as he looked at the painting in disbelief.

"You can have it tested." Percival suggested.

"How do you know this so clearly?" Jerry asked, still in disbelief.

Percival signaled to Thomas, who handed him a long box that he had been holding under his arm. He took out a scroll from the box and, with Thomas's help, unrolled it.

A painting identical to 'Thousand Hills in Late Snow' was displayed in front of everyone.

"Because the real painting has always been in my possession." Percival's lips curled up in a smug smile.

Jerry was shocked. He stepped forward to examine Percival's painting carefully. The more he looked at

it, the more his heart trembled.

By just looking at the painting, he could recognize Gustaf's distinctive brushstrokes. He couldn't believe that he had spent 3 billion dollars on a replica!

"Don't be disheartened, Jerry." Percival said, feigning sympathy. "Although your painting is a replica, it's still a rare masterpiece and quite valuable."

In round two, the disciples suffered another defeat.

Jerry was so stunned that he couldn't speak. He could only watch as Percival rolled up the authentic 'Thousand Hills in Late Snow' and presented it to Dorian and Cordelia.

"Father-in-law, mother-in-law, this painting is my gift to you."

Dorian and Cordelia didn't dare accept it. They didn't know what to do.

"You can consider it as a gift for Vivienne. Just accept it on her behalf." Percival took Vivienne's hand and held it in his. "We're getting our marriage license soon."

Vivienne was taken aback.

What was he talking about?

She only agreed to not call off their engagement, but how did it turn into getting a marriage license?

Vivienne's silence, in Dorian's eyes, was her tacit agreement to the idea of getting a marriage license.

In an instant, he found himself even more irritated with Percival.

"Accept the gift for Vivienne; we'll consider it part of her wedding gift." He said to Cordelia.

At this, Jerry and his fellows all suddenly wore grim expressions.

Dawson, who had been hobbling down the stairs from the second floor, overheard this and exclaimed,

"What wedding gift?! No way! I don't agree!"

Dorian and Cordelia furrowed their brows at him. What business was it of Dawson's what they planned for their daughter's wedding gift?

Under the confused gaze of the couple, Dawson fell silent. Only after a while did he finally stutter out, "I mean, the interior of this villa is quite nice; I don't agree with changing it."

"Mr. Dawson, did you doze off?" Dorian stood up to offer Dawson a seat. "I called you down for tea, but you didn't respond."

Dawson, not daring to take Dorian's seat, sat down in the vacant spot next to Eric. He couldn't help but gasp as he glanced resentfully at Vivienne, who was sipping her tea across the table.

His dear Vivienne had been ruthless earlier; he ached everywhere, yet there wasn't a scratch to be seen on him.

Vivienne, with her porcelain fingers delicately cradling a cup of tea that Percival had brewed, was serenely tasting it, completely ignoring Dawson's bitter gaze.

Left with no choice, Dawson turned his attention to Jerry, whispering, "What's happening? I thought we were trying to get rid of the jerk? How did we get to dowries?"

Jerry gave him a look that spoke volumes, but he chose to remain silent.

How could he tell Dawson that he and Eric had attempted to outclass Percival but had ended up utterly defeated?

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Donald glanced at Jerry and Eric, and ran a hand through his hair with a hint of vanity.

"By the way, Vivienne," he said while grinning at her, "I recently pimped up a new car. I think you're gonna love it. I was actually thinking of letting you take it for a spin."

"Oh?" At the mention of the car, Vivienne's interest was piqued.

Donald was known for his top-notch car modifications, and she'd driven some of his custom builds before.

"Where's the car?" She asked, arching an eyebrow at him.

"It's on its way." Donald replied while shooting a smug glance at Percival, who was sipping his tea with a faint smile hidden behind his cup.

Just then, Donald's phone rang. His assistant sounded terrified. "Sir, your car, the TLJ691, was hit... It's totaled."

"What?!" Donald's eyes widened in shock. "Who the hell hit my car?!"

His assistant stuttered. "It was... it was Mr. Ellington's men... They drove a steamroller right into it."

Donald shot Percival an enraged look. "Percival, did you destroy the gift I was going to give Vivienne?!"

"You've ruined so many of my properties." Percival took another sip of his tea, his voice calm and composed. "Is it so terrible that I destroyed your car?"

He turned to Vivienne with a tender expression on his face. "Vivienne, I can get you any car you want.

My car modification skills are quite good, too. Would you like to give it a try?"

This caught Vivienne so off guard that she nearly choked on her tea.

Jerry and the others glared at Percival, but none of them dared to challenge him.

At that moment, Daniel cleared his throat. "Vivienne, I've also got a gift for you."

He pulled out a large box, intending to show her the top-notch ruby he'd picked out, but something felt off. The box seemed to be... moving?

Perplexed, he opened the box only to find a sleepy kitten inside, which meowed softly at him.

"Aaaah! It's a cat!" Daniel shrieked like a schoolgirl and flung the box away. He jumped up, almost landing in Jerry's arms.

Vivienne caught the kitten mid-air. It was a British Shorthair that was silver in color. She thought it was quite adorable.

But Daniel looked like he'd seen a ghost. It was quite amusing, considering he was a big, burly man.

As a kid, Daniel had been pranked and locked in a room full of stray cats for three days and nights, which left him traumatized. He'd never been able to get over his fear of cats.

Vivienne petted the kitten and glanced at Percival, who was leisurely sipping his tea.

Leopold, who had been shying away in the corner, was suddenly under the scrutiny of Jerry and the others.

"How did he know what gifts we were going to give?" Jerry asked as his gaze fixed on Leopold.

All eyes turned to Leopold.

Leopold raised his head nervously, flashing an awkward smile at them.

The next moment, he was being dragged out to the yard by them.

They couldn't fight in the living room. It would scare Vivienne's parents.

"Percival, help me!" Leopold cried out to Percival in panic.

Percival merely sipped his tea, not even sparing him a glance.

Just then, Vivienne's parents, Dorian and Cordelia, who were sitting on the couch, turned to her,

looking confused. "Shouldn't we stop them?"

Vivienne and Percival, both enjoying their tea, shrugged off their concerns.

After finishing his third cup of tea, Percival picked up his phone and dialed Eden Perez, the CEO of the

Perez Group.

"Mr. Perez."

Eden sounded nervous. "Mr. Ellington, how may I assist you?"

"I have a complaint." Percival said with a soft laugh.

"A complaint?" Eden asked, sounding confused. "Who dared to offend you?"

"Your eldest son." Percival replied. "He and his men destroyed all my properties in Havenwood. What do you propose we do about this?"

"What?!" Eden's voice rose several pitches. "Those little pests really had the balls to mess with you?!

I'll skin them alive!"

Percival hung up, finally feeling satisfied.

Just as the group of eight, who had just returned from Leopold's "punishment," were relaxing in the living room, their phones rang almost simultaneously.

"Dad?" Jerry answered.

Just as he asked, a furious roar came through from the other end of the line.

"You little brat! Do you have a death wish? What gave you the audacity to tear down someone else's house?! Get your ass back here right now! If you aren't on a plane back within half an hour, don't blame me for sending someone to fetch you!"

Jerry froze, and the other seven men apparently suffered the same fate. They were all left stunned by the incessant yelling from their parents.

He glanced at Percival, who was smirking, and instantly understood what had happened. "Percival, do you have no shame?! At your age, you're resorting to tattling like a child?!"

Percival, with a smug expression, wrapped an arm around Vivienne's waist. "I'm just following my fiancée's advice."

"Vivienne, are you just going to let him bully us like this?" Daniel complained, still standing a safe distance away, in fear of the cat in Vivienne's arms.

Vivienne raised an eyebrow. She was actually thoroughly enjoying the spectacle. She didn't want to get involved and shrugged. "You guys bully my fiancé, and you expect me to help you? Eight of you lost to him alone. Aren't you embarrassed?"

Daniel was speechless.

At that moment, their phones started ringing like crazy again. They saw that it was their parents' numbers. They all knew a throbbing headache was coming, making them all reluctant to answer. They dashed upstairs to pack their bags, then rushed back down, ready to leave.

"Don't forget to take the hazardous waste in the yard with you." Percival called after them.

The eight guys froze and glanced disdainfully at Leopold, who was barely conscious on the ground. But they still picked him up and left.

With the nine of them gone, the living room became eerily quiet.

Percival took a deep breath. With those nine troublemakers gone, even the air seemed fresher.

He turned to Thomas and gave him an order. "Clean up the room next to Vivienne's and disinfect it thoroughly."

Thomas immediately complied, and without Percival having to say anything, he moved all of Percival's luggage into the cleaned room after tidying up the room in which Dawson used to stay.

After Percival moved into the room next to Vivienne's as he wished, he gave Thomas another order.

"Remember to send the bills for renovating my houses to Leopold."

Thomas silently mourned for Leopold. Broken bones and a hefty bill, and it wasn't a small sum either.

Leopold's allowance for the year might just cover it.

Chapter 205

A week later, the senior students of Cloudcrest High School were successfully embracing their college entrance exams.

Half a month later, the college entrance exam results came out, and to everyone's surprise, two dark

horses emerged from Class Eighteen.

One was Charlotte Redwood, who was admitted to the Cambridge Excellence Institute with the highest score in the state, and the other was Faye Churchill, who was admitted to the Harvard Knowledge Institute with the second highest score in the state.

It was already quite an achievement for a class to have one student admitted to such prestigious institutions, yet somehow, Class Eighteen had produced two!

As for Logan Wood, Oberon Harper, and Coral Lockwood, they too had made it to pretty good universities.

Upon hearing this news, the parents of other classes who had previously targeted Vivienne were somewhat stunned.

They all doubted their memories. Could this really be the achievement of the once-failing Class Eighteen?

Lysander was overjoyed. This year, besides the suddenly blossoming Class Eighteen, there were two students admitted to the prestigious universities. An accomplishment the previous years could not

match.

It was all thanks to his brilliant move of inviting Vivienne to be Class Eighteen's headteacher.

The parents of the students in Class Eighteen never dreamed that their children could achieve such good grades. On graduation day, they surrounded Vivienne, expressing their gratitude in turns.

Meanwhile, the parents of the junior students, upon seeing Vivienne, became as eager as a wolf that had just spotted its prey. They surrounded Vivienne to inquire about which class she would be taking next year. Whichever class she would head would be the class they planned on transferring their children into.

Other schools also wanted to recruit this talent. Since Vivienne was generally unreachable, they took the opportunity to approach her at Cloudcrest High School's graduation ceremony.

Vivienne was surrounded by a sea of people, while Percival, the not-so-useful gym teacher, was pushed aside.

"Don't even think about it. Vivienne won't stay." He said while looking at Lysander, who was standing beside him, smiling from ear to ear.

Vivienne came to Cloudcrest High School to look for Anna. Now that Anna was no longer here, she

naturally wouldn't stay.

Lysander's smile stiffened, and he looked at Percival with a hint of resentment. As if he were the reason he could no longer fantasize and daydream.

"Daydreaming too much can lead to senility." It was like Percival had come to retrieve his prized possession. Giving Lysander the impression that he should stop living in his fantasy land.

Sure enough, when Vivienne was asked for the nth time which class she would be taking next year, she said, "I'm sorry. Today is my last day as a headteacher at Cloudcrest High School. After this, I'll resign and no longer teach."

The parents of the junior students were greatly disappointed and dispersed, leaving only the parents of Senior Class Eighteen, who were still enthusiastically surrounding Vivienne.

This scene, naturally, was witnessed by many, including Scott Brooks, who had come to attend Arabella's graduation ceremony at her request.

"That seems to be your foster sister." Scott said, looking at Vivienne in the crowd. "Let's go say hello."

A shadow crossed Arabella's eyes. She was reluctant.

Originally, her practice test scores were enough to meet the admission line of the prestigious universities, but she underperformed in the actual college entrance exams and only got into a lower-ranked university.

On the other hand, the performance of Vivienne's Class Eighteen was surprisingly outstanding. Even Coral, who transferred to her class, got into a top-tier university, while she, the talented girl from Havenwood, became ordinary.

Ever since the test results came out a few days ago, she had heard countless praises directed at Vivienne.

Naturally, she also heard many people discussing her, the talented girl from Havenwood, whose reputation didn't match reality.

But when she saw the handsome and noble man standing not far from Vivienne, her eyes lit up, and she actively took Scott's arm. "Dad, let's go congratulate my sister's students on their good results."

Scott stiffened. Even though Arabella had been back for a while, he still couldn't warm up to her. Every time she got this close, he felt uncomfortable, even a bit repulsed. He wanted to immediately shake her off.

However, from the first time he saw Vivienne, all he wanted to do was get close to her. She gave off the same kind and caring vibe as his lost love, Karen.

Scott suppressed his urge to shake off Arabella and walked with her towards Vivienne.

"Mr. Brooks." Upon seeing Scott approaching, Percival nodded at him.

"Mr. Ellington." After a curt greeting, Scott wanted to find Vivienne to say a few words.

But Arabella, who was holding his arm, subtly dropped something at Percival's feet, then signaled her henchmen with her eyes.

The few sycophants gasped and pointed at Percival's feet.

"Oh my! How did Arabella's bracelet end up falling off Mr. Ellington? Have you two been seeing each other secretly?"

Their exclamations were loud enough to silence the crowd around Vivienne. All eyes turned to Percival.

Scott paused in his tracks, frowning as he glanced between Percival and Arabella.

"You people should stop spreading rumors." Arabella blushed slightly as her eyes glanced at Percival with a hint of a smile, hesitating to elaborate further. "Me and my brother-in-law... there's nothing

intimate going on."

Despite her claims, her demeanor only seemed to convince the crowd of the opposite, insinuating a hidden relationship.

Most people present were aware of Vivienne and Percival's relationship, and their expressions turned disapproving at the sight of him.

Vivienne's expression turned cold. She had made it clear once before that Percival was her man, and Arabella needed to keep her hands off him.

Clearly, Arabella was not one to listen.

"Oh, Arabella, just be honest." The sycophants egged her on, following her cues. "You're so beautiful.

It's not a surprise that he likes you and carries your bracelet around."

"Humph!" Percival scoffed, striding through the crowd to pull Vivienne into his arms, looking disdainfully at the attention-seeking Arabella. "Am I blind? To be interested in a girl who just graduated high school and is already pregnant before marriage?"

Chapter 206

The crowd fell silent in unison. All eyes gravitated towards Arabella, whose face had paled dramatically.

Even Arabella's usual sycophants were dumbstruck. They were unsure whether to follow the script that

Arabella had been playing out so far.

"Mr. Ellington, what do you mean by this?" Scott asked with his eyebrows furrowed in confusion. He wasn't particularly fond of Arabella, but he was her father, after all, and he wouldn't stand for someone tarnishing her reputation.

"Scott, you're not in the loop?" Percival, with his arm around Vivienne and the other hand in his pocket, replied with a condescending sneer. "Your daughter was confirmed to be pregnant over half a month ago at the city hospital."

Arabella's face lost even more color as her hand instinctively reached for her stomach. She had paid a substantial sum to keep her hospital visit confidential and couldn't fathom how Percival had found out.

She had initially planned to terminate the pregnancy as soon as she found out, but with the college entrance exams just over a week away, she didn't want to risk any post-procedure complications that could affect future pregnancies. So, she had gritted her teeth and decided to postpone it until after she had taken the exams.

However, right after the exams, the Brooks family had been unable to find the renowned Specter

Healer and had instead enlisted the help of the world-renowned Pendleton family, one of the four great families of Rivenwood, who specialized in medicine, to treat Tristan.

The prodigy of the Pendleton family was Calista Pendleton. She had chosen to specialize in medicine and had quickly built a reputation as a medical genius. At the young age of twenty-two, she had already become a well-respected doctor with many high-impact papers and medical awards to her name.

The Brooks family brought Calista to Havenwood to treat Tristan.

Ashley Edwards, who was acquainted with Calista, had been asked to accompany her.

Arabella had hoped to terminate her pregnancy during this time, but Ashley's constant surveillance had made that impossible.

She was constantly worried that Calista, with her exceptional medical skills, would notice her condition and tell Ashley, which would have inevitably led to her secret being revealed.

But she hadn't expected Percival to expose her in such a ruthless manner.

"Arabella?" Scott initially wanted to clear the air, but considering the surrounding onlookers, he decided it would be better to discuss the matter at home.

"Let's go home."

However, one of Arabella's sycophants suddenly blurted out, "Arabella, is the baby in your belly Mr.

Ellington's? Otherwise, how did your bracelet end up with him?"

The sycophant then turned to Percival. "Mr. Ellington, if you're the father of Arabella's child, you can't just deny it!"

Percival shot him a cold look, silencing him instantly.

The crowd began to whisper among themselves, clearly believing the sycophant's words.

"You expect me to take responsibility for this? You're not worth it." Percival retorted with disdain as his eyes fell on Arabella. "I wouldn't mind waiting until you're seven weeks pregnant to do a DNA test. I'd be more than happy to help you find the real father of your child."

Arabella stared at Percival in horror, as if she were looking at a monster.

She couldn't possibly agree to a DNA test, let alone allow Percival to investigate the paternity of her unborn child.

If it were discovered that the father of her baby was a patient from the N&S Psychiatric Hospital, her reputation and future would be ruined.

"Dad!" Arabella grabbed Dorian's hand. "I'm not feeling well; can we go home?"

Scott glanced at Percival, sensing that he knew something about the father of Arabella's child. But he didn't want to risk any more scandals today.

For the sake of the Brooks family's reputation, he decided to leave.

"We'll go home and talk about this." He said, nodding at Arabella.

Arabella felt a chill down her spine. She knew that once she returned to the Brooks family's mansion, she would be thoroughly questioned about her pregnancy. She would have to come up with a convincing story about the father of her child.

With a mix of resentment and defiance, she shot Percival a glance, gritted her teeth, and discreetly sent a few messages on her phone.

Percival watched with a steely gaze as Scott left with Arabella.

Vivienne, who was nestled in his arms, suddenly broke the silence. "You really care about her, don't you? You even know exactly how many weeks she's suspected to be pregnant?"

For some reason, she said this with an unnerving calmness.

Percival thought he detected a hint of danger in her tone.

"Thomas." He promptly dialed his trusted associate. "I need you to ensure that the scandal of

Arabella's pregnancy does not get swept under the rug."

"I got it, Percival." Thomas responded before Percival disconnected the call.

He looked at Vivienne, noticing the threat in her demeanor had mysteriously vanished. He couldn't help

but chuckle inwardly.

His precious little Vivienne had quite the jealous streak.

To make Arabella's commute to Cloudcrest High School easier, Scott bought back the Hawthorn

Mansion that Beatrice had sold to pay off her debts.

After the family reunion, Judith and her brood planned to return to their home in Rivenwood.

However, Arabella had requested their presence for her graduation ceremony.

Thus, Judith, Timothy Brooks, Ronald Brooks, and Melissa Brooks were all present in Havenwood.

Arabella and Scott hadn't returned to the Hawthorn Mansion yet.

Ashley, who was engrossed on her phone, suddenly jumped up, yelling, "Grandma, Mom, come look at

this! Arabella is trending on Havenwood's Twitter again!"

Timothy and Ronald, who had just entered the room, were startled by her outburst.

"Arabella is trending again for what?"

Judith and Melissa, who were arranging flowers, frowned at the commotion.

Melissa tried to hush Ashley. "Keep your voice down, Ashley. Why the big fuss about a Twitter trend?"

"Look! She's pregnant!" Ashley handed over her phone. "She's only eighteen and fresh out of high school, but she's already expecting?! She's making a mockery of our family name!"

"How can that be?" Melissa looked at Ashley's phone skeptically. "Arabella has always been so well-behaved. Are you sure this isn't fake news?"

Judith, the matriarch, silently put on her glasses and bent over to examine Ashley's phone.

Meanwhile, Timothy and Ronald each pulled out their phones to check the trending news on Twitter.

The video on the news showed Arabella intentionally dropping her bracelet at Percival's feet.

This was followed by a clip of one of Arabella's sycophants spinning a tale of a secret affair between

Arabella and Percival, only to have Percival publicly expose the truth about her pregnancy.

Chapter 207

Judith and Melissa's brows furrowed more deeply, while Timothy and Ronald's faces darkened.

"Has Arabella lost her mind?!" Ashley looked at Arabella in the video with disgust, which was quickly

masked by anger. "Not only is she pregnant before marriage, but she now wants to pin the blame on

Percival to make him the fall guy?!"

Ha!

As if she were even on his level!

A man like Percival was beyond Arabella's wildest dreams!

Ashley sneered inwardly but put on a face of grievance. "Mom, Grandma, this scandal has spread all over Havenwood. What if it reaches Rivenwood? What will people think of our family? My reputation will be ruined too! People will think I'm just as promiscuous as Arabella because we're cousins!"

Judith, of course, had thought of this as well. Just as she was about to reassure Ashley, Ronald's cell phone rang.

"It's Grandpa." Ronald's face turned grim, but he sighed and reluctantly answered the call.

Sure enough, Baron's furious roar came through the phone. "What the hell is Arabella thinking?!

Pregnant before marriage is bad enough, but she's now trying to pin the blame on Old Richard's precious grandson?! She's got some nerve!"

Baron was livid. Ever since Arabella was accepted back into the family, he had been constantly bothered by Richard. The old man would often show up at his nursing home to taunt him.

Unfortunately, Richard was always in the right, leaving Baron no choice but to swallow his pride.

He knew many old friends in the nursing home, and every time Richard came, they would gather around to watch the drama, enjoying how Richard scolded him like a wayward grandson.

He felt like his stay at the nursing home was anything but restful.

Arabella, his newly recognized granddaughter, was literally driving him to an early grave!

After a harsh scolding from Baron, Ronald didn't dare argue. He could only nod and agree.

By the time Ronald hung up, Judith's face was ashen. She said to Timothy, "Call your older brother.

Ask him why he didn't suppress the news when he was there. How did he let it spread like wildfire?

Even the old man knows about it now!"

"Right."

Timothy quickly called Scott to ask what happened. When he hung up, he frowned and explained to

Judith what he had been told. "Mom, big brother said he tried to suppress the news immediately, but

the Ellington family stepped in."

The Brooks family fell silent. They were no match for the Ellingtons.

Arabella being exposed for her premarital pregnancy was bad enough, but she even tried to pin the baby on Percival.

Did she know who Percival was?

He was the next head of the Ellington family. He stood at the top of Rivenwood's Four Prominent Families.

If Percival decided to teach Arabella a lesson, they would be helpless.

"Mom!" Ashley checked her phone and groaned at Melissa. "Arabella's scandal has spread to our school! My classmates are asking me about it! There are even rumors on the school forum saying that I'm the one who's pregnant!"

She gritted her teeth in anger, knowing that Arabella's mess would tarnish her own reputation.

"Thank goodness you've already graduated." Melissa patted her daughter's hand, trying to comfort her.

"By the time you start college, this will all be over."

Ashley's face turned even grimmer.

She was a bit resentful that the Brooks were so biased towards Arabella, who had not only caused such a scandal but also damaged her own reputation. Yet they asked her to keep the peace.

Ashley was a girl Judith had watched grow up and loved. How could she not understand the grievance in her granddaughter's heart?

After a moment of silence, she said, "Let's wait until Scott and Arabella get back. Then we can figure out what really happened."

Just as she finished speaking, Scott walked in with a downcast Arabella. When they saw everyone's eyes on them, Scott knew they were waiting for them.

"Grandma, Uncle, Aunt." Arabella's pale face looked even paler as she called out cautiously.

"Sit down." Judith pointed to the couch.

Scott sat next to Timothy, and Arabella tried to sit next to Ashley.

But as soon as Ashley saw her coming, she got up with a dark face and moved to sit next to Melissa, not giving Arabella any face.

Arabella's gaze darkened for a moment, but she quickly covered it up with a pitiful look.

"Arabella, the news said you're pregnant. Is it true?" Judith asked in a deep voice.

Arabella nodded pitifully. She had no choice but to admit it. She had seen the news.

Her visits to the gynecologist had been exposed, and the Brooks family could easily find out the truth with a simple investigation.

"Whose child is it?" Judith asked, barely suppressing her anger.

"It's... It's Paul's..." Arabella's gaze flickered as her voice grew smaller and smaller.

"What?!" Scott's brows furrowed. His face was a mix of shock and anger. "When did this start?"

"When I first went to Rivenwood..." Arabella's words were vague. She acted like she was a poor girl led astray. "I didn't know anyone, so I was scared, but Paul was so nice to me, so I just..."

"I see!" Judith retorted furiously as her laughter gradually grew tainted by anger. "Old Richard dares to pick a bone with our family?! This is all his grandson's fault! He caused this mess!"

Ashley, however, glanced at Arabella with a hint of confusion.

She had never noticed Arabella being shy or reserved when visiting Rivenwood. In fact, she was quite the bold, dominating force.

Moreover, Ashley didn't think Arabella was romantically interested in Paul. It was quite the opposite.

Arabella had always seemed to have an eye for Percival, a fact Ashley had witnessed numerous times.

Why would Arabella allow herself to get pregnant with Paul's child if she was smitten with Percival?

"Call Paul right now!" Judith thundered while addressing Arabella. "He's responsible for this mess, and he owes us an explanation!"

Obediently, Arabella dialed Paul's number.

He arrived quickly, his face stern and cold.

His demeanor towards Arabella was far from the usual affectionate attitude. Instead, it was filled with a sense of distance and irritation.

After exchanging pleasantries with the Brooks family elders, Scott asked him, "Arabella claims she's pregnant. Is the child yours?"

Paul cast a disgusted glance at Arabella.

Arabella stared back at him with eyes filled with a stern warning.

Irritated, he had no choice but to nod and confirm it. "Yes."

A sigh of relief escaped Arabella. She knew she could persuade Paul to take the fall, using the promise of benefits.

Upon leaving Cloudcrest High School earlier, she had already devised this plan to deal with the Brooks family's interrogation.

She'd sent a message to Paul, informing him that she would marry him if he agreed to claim her unborn child.

Being the most cherished daughter of the Brooks family, the wedding gift she'd bring to the Ellington family would certainly benefit Paul. Not to mention, the Brooks family would no doubt support him in his

rivalry with Percival for the headship of the Ellington family.

Chapter 208

Initially, Paul was wooing Arabella with the purpose of marrying her and gaining the support of the Brooks family.

She was sure that the allure of such a profitable alliance would make Paul happy to be the fall guy.

After all, she planned to use her intention to go to college as an excuse to abort the child.

Once she married Paul, they would have their own children, and with the help of the Brooks, she was confident that Paul would eventually let go of his reservations.

And as for Percival, she had to throw all hopes for him out the window. She was so fond of him, yet he

treated her like garbage.

Once she married into the prestigious Ellington family and helped Paul seize the position of family head, she would make Percival kneel before her and beg for forgiveness.

Seeing that Paul accepted the situation, Judith finally relaxed a bit. "What are your plans moving forward?" She asked, "Now that the cat's out of the bag, you still owe Arabella an explanation."

"Arabella is a minor." Paul said after a moment. "We're planning to host a small ceremony for now. I'll tell my parents about this and let them arrange everything. Once Arabella's of legal age, we'll get a marriage license."

Judith nodded. "Very well. But make sure it's done quickly. Only when news of your marriage spreads can we salvage Arabella's reputation."

"I better get going." Paul said, not wanting to linger any longer. He turned to leave, but Scott stopped him.

"Wait!" Scott was exuding the energy of an angry and protective father. "Arabella is my daughter. I don't want her to suffer after marrying into your family. I want all your past indiscretions cleaned up. And the

women you've been with, they better be out of the picture."

Paul's face changed, but he clenched his teeth and agreed.

Arabella quickly stood up to send him off, hoping to smooth things over with Paul.

But Paul simply gave her a cold look, pursed his lips, and left without saying a word.

When he first heard that Arabella wanted to marry him, he was over the moon. But what she said next

left him feeling like he'd taken a plunge into an icy lake.

She wanted him to be the fall guy for her pregnancy?!

He hadn't expected that Arabella, who usually seemed so pure and likable, would have such a messy

private life. She was pregnant and couldn't find the father of the child, so she turned to him.

Arabella's offer was too enticing to refuse, despite his initial desire to do so.

Richard Ellington was so biased that, without the support of the Brooks family, Paul had no chance of

contending for the position of Ellington family head.

After much hesitation, he decided to swallow his pride and play the part of the fool.

The only silver lining was that Arabella had some decency and promised to abort the child.

Otherwise, if she were to give birth, he'd have to live with some strange man's bastard child, calling him

father. He feared he might one day lose his temper and harm the child.

He was so furious that as soon as he got in the car, he called up one of his flings for a 'deep conversation.'

Why should Scott have any say in his matters?

He couldn't even handle his own daughter, yet he had the audacity to tell him what to do with his women?!

Was he crazy?

Arabella was already tainted, and if he didn't play around with a few more women, he'd feel like he was at a loss.

As Arabella watched Paul's car disappear into the distance, she knew he wasn't happy, but she didn't care. She'd achieved her goal.

As long as Paul claimed her unborn child, what did it matter if she was pregnant without a ring on her finger?

Paul might not be as good as Percival, but he was still a renowned gentleman of Rivenwood. People

would only envy her.

"Cousin, why was your fiancé so cold towards you today?" Ashley asked Arabella carefully.

"Probably some work issues." Arabella nonchalantly replied. She was growing to dislike Ashley more

and more. If it weren't for Ashley's constant surveillance, she would have gotten rid of her bastard child

a long time ago.

"Really?" Ashley chuckled. "You used to spend so much time with Tristan that I thought you two were

an item. I really didn't see this coming."

Arabella's face darkened.

Truth be told, if Tristan hadn't been crippled, he would have been the perfect candidate. He was

obedient and could be easily manipulated.

She wouldn't have to put up with Paul's anger and contempt.

But Calista had said that Tristan couldn't fully recover. He was destined to be impaired for the rest of

his life. If she married him, she'd become the laughing stock of the town.

Even if Paul was a simpleton, Tristan, being the adopted son of the Brooks family was far less

prestigious than Paul, being the young master of the Ellington family.

"Tristan and I share a sibling-like bond." Arabella replied with a forced smile.

"Is that so?" Ashley still looked amused. She stood up and made an announcement to everyone. "I'm going to visit Calista at the Pendleton Hospital to see how she's treating Tristan."

"That's a good idea." Judith agreed, adding, "Calista put her research on hold to come to Havenwood.

Make sure to take good care of her."

Upon hearing Calista's name, Judith unconsciously showed an expression of admiration, which sparked jealousy in Arabella. "Grandma really likes Calista." She muttered.

Before leaving, Ashley gave Arabella a mocking glance, seemingly trying to point out how their grandma would never admire someone who was pregnant out of wedlock?

Every respectable family in Rivenwood spoke highly of Calista. They all wish their sons could marry her.

Calista's reputation and achievements in the medical field were enviable, even by many men.

Moreover, her numerous research projects have gained national support. Marrying her would mean scaling countless social ladders.

Take Ashley's grandmother for example, didn't she want her cousin Ronald Brooks to marry Calista?

However, Calista's standards were sky-high. She didn't even bat an eye at the young men in

Rivenwood. Even a prime bachelor like Ronald couldn't catch her fancy, as her heart was wholly

dedicated to medical research.

Fortunately, her cousin Ronald didn't harbor any feelings for Calista.

Even so, many individuals would flock to her research institute daily, hoping to curry favor with her.

Unfortunately, due to the confidential nature of her research, they couldn't even step foot inside.

Wasn't she jealous?

Yes, she was.

But jealousy was futile. Calista was simply too formidable and strong.

Ashley had a servant prepare a selection of imported fruits, each specifically chosen to Calista's

preference.

Once ready, she took them to the Pendleton Hospital.

The Pendleton family had private hospitals scattered across the country. Once Calista arrived in

Havenwood, She didn't go where the Brooks family was.

Instead, she directly called for Tristan to be sent to the Pendleton Hospital. After examining Tristan, she immediately started performing surgery on him.

Tristan's injuries were severe. He was beaten to the point where nearly every bone in his body was fractured. If it hadn't been for the Brooks family's willingness to spare no expense, he might have been bedridden for the rest of his life. He would have been as immobile as a pile of mud.

Chapter 209

When Ashley arrived at the hospital room, she saw Tristan obediently lying in bed, listening intently as Calista briefed him on his recovery and gave him instructions to follow.

Calista, dressed in a white lab coat and sporting a pair of golden-rimmed glasses, looked elegant and sophisticated.

She held a tablet in one hand and looked at Tristan with a firm yet authoritative gaze as she spoke, displaying a unique commanding charm.

Tristan, on the other hand, was looking at her with unusually soft eyes. There was even a trace of a smile playing on his lips. It was such a stark contrast to his usual brooding and intimidating demeanor.

Ashley couldn't help but shake her head in amazement.

Calista had somehow managed to tame Tristan, who was normally as wild and unpredictable as a rabid dog.

“Dr. Pendleton.” Ashley greeted her with a warm smile as she entered the room and placed a basket of fresh fruits on the table in front of Calista. “Some fruits for you. They’re all your favorites. Eat them to replenish your vitamins.”

“Thank you.” Calista replied, taking the basket with one hand.

“How’s Tristan’s recovery?” Ashley glanced at Tristan, who immediately resumed his brooding expression as he met her gaze, as if his earlier soft demeanor towards Calista was a mere hallucination.

“He’ll be able to walk again. He just can’t participate in any strenuous activities.” Calista answered while adjusting her glasses and setting her tablet down. “He needs to stay away from any rough sports or heavy exercises.”

Ashley couldn’t help but feel a bit of schadenfreude. She wondered if Tristan would still take part in Arabella's schemes against her now that he was semi-disabled. Would he have ended up in this state if Arabella hadn't persuaded him to provoke Percival?

Tristan, however, seemed to have already accepted this outcome.

"It's okay. I'm grateful I can still walk; at least I'm not bedridden for life. And it's all thanks to your excellent skills, Dr. Pendleton. I don't know how to thank you enough."

"As a doctor, it's my duty to heal and save lives. You don't need to thank me." Calista replied indifferently. "Besides, the Brooks family has paid a hefty sum for this."

Ashley almost laughed out loud at Tristan's flustered expression.

Calista was indeed a straightforward woman.

With just a few words, she had brushed off any potential sense of obligation Tristan might have felt towards her.

Upon seeing Calista struggling with the fruits and her tablet, Ashley offered to carry the fruits for her.

"Calista, I can bring these to your office for you."

"Alright." Calista nodded, gave some instructions to the nurse, and left the room with Ashley without sparing Tristan another glance.

Once they reached Calista's office, Ashley helped unpack the fruits.

They sat down and began to chat while snacking on the fruits. After a few minutes of idle chatter,

Ashley brought up Arabella. "Calista, did you hear about the latest scandal involving my cousin,

Arabella?"

"Oh?" Calista frowned mildly. She wasn't particularly interested in gossip.

Calista had met Arabella when she visited Tristan at the hospital. She had also heard about Arabella's

various scandals when she was in Rivenwood. She thought of Arabella as nothing more than a pretty

face with no brains, an individual not worth a second glance.

So, when she heard that Tristan had been beaten up because of Arabella, she had even less regard for

Tristan.

"Well, she's pregnant, and she isn't even married." Ashley took out her phone and showed Calista the

news. "And she has the audacity to claim that Percival is the father of her child. I don't even think Paul

is actually the father."

Calista wasn't interested in Arabella or the notorious playboy Paul from the Ellington family. She

deemed these mediocre people, including Ashley, not worth her attention.

The only thing that could possibly pique her interest would be if the once crippled Percival, against all

odds, managed to stand up and walk again.

However, as she scrolled through the news article, she paused when Percival's picture popped up. She pointed at the image, asking, "This is Percival?"

"Yeah." Ashley replied with a smirk. "Can you believe that my cousin once thought Percival would be her knight in shining armor? She's delusional! She's only managed to ruin her own reputation."

Calista, however, didn't hear a single word Ashley said. She was too focused on the video of Percival.

Her eyes fell on the woman Percival was holding in his arms.

"Who is she?" She asked in a tone that was hard to read.

"Oh, her?" There was a flicker of jealousy in Ashley's eyes. "That's Vivienne. Percival's fiancée, and Arabella's adopted sister."

Calista only focused on the term "fiancée."

"What's her educational background?" Calista asked.

"I think she has a double Ph.D. in medicine and biology from Elite University." Ashley replied, not quite understanding why Calista was asking about Vivienne. "She's quite impressive. She finished her

studies when she was just sixteen.”

And she, Ashley, had just graduated high school at eighteen.

Sometimes, comparing oneself with others was indeed a recipe for disappointment.

Calista fell silent for a while as she processed the information she had just received. She then asked,

“So after earning her dual Ph.D., she chose to teach at a small high school?”

Ashley nodded, still puzzled by Calista's persistent inquiries about Vivienne.

“Short-sighted, lacks ambition.” Calista commented on Vivienne.

How could such a woman be a match for Percival?

...

Cloudcrest High School.

“Achoo!”

Vivienne sneezed abruptly while attending the high school graduation ceremony with Percival.

“Is the air conditioning in the auditorium too cold?” Percival asked with concern.

Vivienne furrowed her brows and shook her head. Why did she feel like someone was badmouthing

her?

All the speeches scheduled for the day were almost done, and it was near the end, leaving only room for the student performances.

Suddenly, someone tapped the mic onstage, following it by clearing their throat. "Ahem. Hello, everyone. We're the graduating seniors of Class Eighteen. For our final act tonight, we'd like to dedicate this to our amazing homeroom teacher, Ms. Vivienne!"

Vivienne's gaze was drawn to the stage. There stood Logan, Oberon, Charlotte, Faye, and Coral.

Logan clutched a guitar, Oberon held a bass, Charlotte was by the keyboard, and surprisingly, Faye sat behind a drum set. Coral was on the mic as her eyes met Vivienne's across the crowd.

"Ms. Vivienne, I've made many mistakes in the past, and you were the one who pulled me out of the mud. You saved Class Eighteen, and in doing so, you saved me too! Now, this song 'Until the End of the World' is for you."

The music, a blend of heavy metal and rock, echoed in the auditorium. Each beat of the drum resonated with every pump of their young hearts.

Coral was the lead singer, and her voice reverberated with the intense music throughout the hall.

The crowd was boiling with excitement.

The students in the audience rose to their feet, chanting along with the melody.

However, the eyes of the five on stage were all on Vivienne. She was the only one to whom they

wanted to convey their emotions.

Chapter 210

The fiery performance by the quintet from Class Eighteen ignited the enthusiasm of the entire student

body.

Even Vivienne and Percival found themselves rising to their feet along with the crowd, captivated by

the performance on stage.

Logan and his team, who had evidently practiced for countless hours, gave an electrifying

performance.

Surprisingly, Coral's voice was impressively melodic.

The tune of "Until the End of the World" stirred the students' youthful passion and energy.

Their memories of Cloudcrest High School, accompanied by Coral's slightly husky voice, played in their

minds like a nostalgic movie.

More than a few students were moved to tears.

Vivienne had always considered herself not to be overly emotional, yet she couldn't help but feel a lump in her throat at this moment.

Sometimes she envied these teenagers. They possessed the kind of carefree innocence that she had lost.

She could be Vivienne of the Emerald Monastery, the young master of the Nine Mystics Society, the Specter Healer, the hacker known as Shadow Wolf, Master Q, or Charles.

But she could never again be a carefree child.

When the song ended, the five of them stood in a line on stage, bowing collectively towards Vivienne.

Suddenly, the rest of the students from the senior class of the high school, each holding a carnation, rushed to Vivienne, stuffing the flowers into her arms.

Vivienne stood there, holding a bunch of carnations. She was touched and surprised; she hadn't expected this.

This moving scene was captured by a nearby photographer.

Little did they know that this photo would later hang in the classroom of the senior class, eventually

becoming a legend of the school.

That day, Percival saw more smiles on Vivienne's face than on any other day since their first meeting.

After returning to the Jade Garden Residences, Percival glanced at Vivienne, who was still clutching

the forty-six carnations she had received, and asked with a smile, "You like flowers that much?"

"I do when they're given with such kindness." Vivienne replied as she turned to look at him.

Percival smiled, pushed open the gate of the mansion, and revealed a spectacle that left Vivienne

stunned.

Every path and walkway in the mansion was lined with radiant scarlet roses.

As Percival led Vivienne inside, they were met by Thaddeus, who was holding the British Shorthair

kitten. "Sis, your room is filled with flowers!"

The kitten in his arms also let out a soft meow.

Originally, Vivienne hadn't planned to keep the kitten that had scared Daniel, but Thaddeus fell in love

with it at first sight.

The British Shorthair kitten, now named Zara, had quickly become a member of their family.

"Huh? Sis, why do you have so many flowers too?" Thaddeus asked, looking at the carnations in

Vivienne's arms. "Did brother-in-law give them to you too?"

Vivienne glanced at Percival, who was smiling as he led her upstairs.

As they approached her room, the scent of roses filled the air. Her room was indeed filled with hundreds of scarlet roses.

"Vivienne Hawthorn." Percival magically produced a Juliet rose and handed it to Vivienne. "I've been remiss in not giving you flowers before, so I'm making up for it today."

Vivienne accepted the exceptionally valuable Juliet rose. She was actually somewhat overwhelmed by Percival's sudden display of romance.

She held the rare rose under her nose, inhaling its scent before asking Percival, "Do you know the language of the Juliet rose?"

"Guarded love." Percival softly replied. "And do you know the language of the scarlet roses?"

Vivienne placed the Juliet rose in the middle of the carnations she was holding. "A love that is both fortunate and romantic."

She stood on her tiptoes and kissed Percival.

Taken aback, Percival hastily pulled her closer, deepening the kiss.

In this room, filled with the scent of roses, Percival passionately claimed Vivienne as both of them eventually fell onto the bed of roses.

The carnations in her arms scattered across the floor, with the Juliet rose nestled among them. Scarlet petals spread out under them, creating a passionate wave that almost overwhelmed her.

Just as Vivienne was about to lose her breath, she forcefully pushed Percival away, pinning him underneath her.

Percival didn't resist as she straddled him, both of them panting as they stared at each other.

"Vivienne, does this mean I'm officially your boyfriend now?" Percival asked as his hand gently caressed her waist.

"No. It means you've just entered the review stage." Vivienne gazed down at him like a queen. She bent down and gently kissed his flushed lips.

"I'll make sure to pass the review then." Percival bit her lip playfully. He could barely contain his desire.

"Meow..."

The sound of a kitten's meow from the doorway broke the romantic atmosphere.

Vivienne and Percival looked up to see Dorian, Cordelia, and Thaddeus, who was holding Zara, all standing at the doorway with their mouths agape.

Dorian and Cordelia were taken aback. They had always assumed that it was Percival who had led their precious daughter astray, but now the tables seemed to have turned.

Could it be that Vivienne was the actual wolf in sheep's clothing?

Thaddeus looked on in confusion. "Sis, brother-in-law, what's going on?"

Vivienne and Percival fell silent.

At that moment, a call from Richard rescued them from this seemingly never-ending awkwardness.

After clearing his throat, Percival stood up and pulled Vivienne up with him, ignoring the strange looks from Dorian's family.

He answered the phone. "Grandpa."

"What's the deal with that rascal, Paul?" Richard's angry voice echoed from the phone. "Did the Brooks family really confirm that the girl they had taken in is carrying his child?"

Arabella was pregnant with Paul's child?

Percival frowned. Considering the timeline, it should have been the result of some psycho in the N&S Psychiatric Hospital.

"Did Paul admit it himself?"

"Of course!" Richard said irritably, "Your uncle and aunt have even come to me to discuss marriage!

They said the girl is still underage for marriage, so they plan to hold the wedding ceremony first to downplay the news and wait till she is of legal age to register the marriage!"

Percival scoffed. He hadn't expected Paul to go this far.

Him tying the Brooks family to his sinking ship, even at the cost of being a cuckold, was something too outrageous for Percival to see coming.

"Do you have any idea how badly the old Baron Brooks scolded me just now?!" Richard was burning with fury. If he could, he'd dismantle Paul into pieces right this instant.