

Million-Dollar 271

Chapter 271

Richard, upon witnessing this, strode forward to stand opposite Baron as he gazed at him with a burning fury.

"What's the matter?!" He roared. "My grandson wants to visit his fiancée, and you have a problem with that?! They are engaged, so it's reasonable and legal."

This damn old codger was always causing trouble for his precious grandson.

He had even driven his grandson out of the Brooks Mansion, leaving Richard simmering with rage and resentment. Now he dared to challenge him again?

Now that Richard was around, how could he let this old curmudgeon have his way?

Baron let out a scoff. "How old is Vivienne? The games of children do not count."

"Baron, my engagement to Vivienne was agreed upon by her mother and my grandfather." Percival shot back. His thick eyebrows began to knit together in anger, and his voice became cold and unyielding.

Baron had been giving him trouble for days, and now he wanted to deny his engagement to Vivienne?

Did the Brooks family really think they held a high place in Vivienne's heart? Or did they believe he was

courteous to them out of fear?

Baron was taken aback. He menacingly glared at Percival but remained silent.

Scott then gestured to Richard. "Richard, would you please join us in the drawing room for some coffee and pastries? We can discuss this matter properly tomorrow. What do you say?"

Scott spoke earnestly, like a loving father trying to make amends.

Richard grunted in response and then remained silent.

Percival glanced at him with profound eyes as the corners of his mouth curled into a cool and indifferent smile.

Scott led them to the drawing room to be seated before rushing off with Baron to attend to more of their

guests.

In the hallway outside the lounge, Eddy Miller was quietly lurking in a corner. He was watching a video on his phone that showed what was going on inside the lounge.

He saw Vivienne in a T-shirt and jeans, engrossed in her phone. In front of her hung a dress specially designed for her by a renowned international designer. This dress was specially commissioned for her

by the Brooks family.

The pastel-colored chiffon layers created a lavish skirt, which was adorned with diamonds. The top had a simple strapless design, accentuated with a matching belt that cinched her waist, which was topped off with a three-carat diamond embellishment. It was the epitome of luxury.

Compared to the second-hand starry skirt Arabella wore at her reunion banquet, the Brooks family's regard for Vivienne was evidently higher.

However, Vivienne seemed uninterested. She showed no inclination to try on the dress.

Not only was she not wearing the dress, but she also sent away the makeup artist and hairstylist. She sat in the lounge, barefaced and natural, refusing to doll herself up.

"Why hasn't that wench changed into her dress yet?" Eddy muttered as he began growing impatient.

Eddy's mother, Paula, installed a small camera in the lounge and tampered with the luxurious dress.

Paula had bought a colorless and odorless aphrodisiac from the black market that would cause anyone who came into contact with it to lose control and become lustful. As soon as Vivienne wore the dress, she would lose her senses and seek a man to vent her desires.

At that moment, the man he had arranged would stage a drama with Vivienne. This would be broadcast live through Stardust's account, the streamer Paula had met at the Pendleton Hospital, known for exposing the scandalous private lives of the wealthy.

Vivienne had humiliated Eddy by live-streaming him doing a headstand while relieving himself. Now, it was his turn to give her a taste of her own medicine. He would let everyone see her in a lustful and promiscuous state, absolutely ruining her reputation forever.

Originally, he had wondered how to dismiss the makeup artist and hairstylist accompanying Vivienne.

But Vivienne herself had sent them away, leaving her alone in the lounge.

However, what frustrated him was that Vivienne, despite not doing her makeup or styling her hair, did not even try on the dress. She didn't even touch it.

In the surveillance footage, she remained motionless, barely moving an inch.

"Is she even a woman?" Eddy grumbled impatiently. "It's such a gorgeous and luxurious dress that even I, a man, am tempted to wear it. Yet she doesn't want to?"

"Oh? Why don't you try it on?"

A cold voice echoed in Eddy's ear from behind him.

He stiffened. The surveillance footage on his phone flickered, and Vivienne, who had been sitting on the sofa looking at her phone, disappeared from the lounge.

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In the banquet hall.

Ashley wasn't helping to entertain the guests as she did at Arabella's reunion banquet in Havenwood.

Given the attention the Brooks family was showering on Vivienne, her mother, Melissa, and grandmother, Judith, were busy mingling with the guests, leaving no room for her to assist.

She was at ease and was leisurely enjoying food and drinks with a group of friends, casually discussing the recent interesting happenings in Rivenwood.

"Ashley, your newly recognized cousin seems to be more favored than the last one." One of her friends teased. "I was at the Havenwood banquet as well, and in terms of scale, arrangement, or the attitude of your family, Arabella's banquet can't compare to this one. Vivienne is so favored, aren't you jealous?"

Ashley just laughed off her friend's sarcastic remark. Perhaps due to the guilt of initially recognizing the wrong person, the Brooks family was really doting on Vivienne.

But at least Vivienne didn't play innocent to win favor or plot against her out of jealousy, like Arabella did.

Well, even if Vivienne didn't voice it out, she could tell from the way Vivienne usually treated the Hawthorn clan that she seemed to have no regard for the benefits of being a part of the Brooks family.

"Wow! Her dress is amazing." Another girl said as she showed a picture on her phone to the others. It was from the Instagram page of the designer who had created Vivienne's gown.

"The Brooks really know how to splurge, don't they? Not only did they manage to get such a high-end designer, but they also ensured that a dress that would normally take a month to create was made in just a few days."

Ashley glanced at the photo of the luxurious gown, feeling a twinge of envy. Among their generation, only Vivienne was treated this way. When the dress was delivered this morning, she couldn't resist trying it on surreptitiously, only for Vivienne to catch her in the act.

Her cheeks were flushed with embarrassment then, but to her surprise, Vivienne didn't seem to mind. She even suggested that they should swap dresses.

Whether Vivienne was sincere or not, Ashley couldn't possibly do something so thoughtless. Of course,

she declined politely.

"Hey, isn't that Percival?" The girl admiring the gown suddenly nudged Ashley, pointing towards the buffet section where the pastries were.

"I always thought he was rather handsome, even when he was in a wheelchair. Now that he's up and about, he's so dashing that it makes your knees weak!"

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No kidding!

Ashley looked up to see Percival, dressed in a black suit, standing beside a table laden with pastries.

He was seemingly looking for something.

His tall stature, combined with his broad shoulders and narrow waist, was accentuated by the casual way he had his hand in his pocket. The half of his handsome face that was visible to her was uncharacteristically soft and had a hint of a smile. She wondered what he might be thinking.

Despite his unusually gentle demeanor right now, Ashley didn't dare approach him.

She remembered how Percival had humiliated Calista earlier. She also saw how Calista, upon entering the banquet hall, would occasionally glance Percival's way without daring to strike up a conversation.

This man was cold to all women except Vivienne. She was certain that the reason he had a soft smile on his face right now was because he was thinking about Vivienne.

She was right. Percival was indeed thinking about Vivienne.

He was surveying the pastries on the table and found a piece of strawberry cake in the middle. Just as he was about to reach for it, another slender hand reached out and grabbed the plate. With one hand on each side of the plate, they both paused.

Percival looked up to find Aaron Miller, the handsome son of the Miller family's patriarch, Mark. Under normal circumstances, he wouldn't pay much attention to such a newcomer to the Rivenwood social circle.

However, he had heard his cousin, Kenneth, talk about Aaron many times, and that had led him to remember the young man.

There was no way he could forget. Kenneth and Aaron were both renowned E-sports players. They were both known as prodigal sons of the gaming world. After Aaron turned pro at the age of fifteen, his team, under the guidance of a mysterious coach, won seven championships in a row, with Aaron himself being named the Most Valuable Player in each tournament.

In contrast, Kenneth, who also turned pro the same year, spent a year warming the bench before he became a starting player. Although his team eventually won two championships and he was named MVP twice, the comparisons between him and Aaron never ceased, especially since Aaron's team had a better record despite a string of defeats this season.

People often said that Aaron was too loyal. He refused to transfer teams and was being held back by older players whose gaming skills were on the decline. If he were to join a better team, he could surely win another championship.

This was why Kenneth held a grudge against Aaron and would occasionally complain to Percival about him.

"It's for my fiancée. She likes it." Percival calmly told Aaron, not letting go of the plate.

He was getting slightly impatient with waiting in the banquet hall. He realized he hadn't seen his precious Vivienne for over eighteen hours. Even though they had video chatted at noon, it wasn't the same as seeing her in person.

So, he was trying to distract himself, and remembering that his darling liked strawberry cake, he

decided to find one for her.

Aaron, hearing this, graciously let go of the plate and put his hands in his pockets.

Percival nodded slightly and left with the last piece of strawberry cake.

As he passed Ashley and her group, he heard them discussing Aaron.

"That's the illegitimate son the Millers just acknowledged, right? He's quite good-looking, but why doesn't he know how to dress properly? He's wearing a T-shirt and jeans to a formal event. Eddy Miller should really teach him some manners."

That sounded familiar.

Percival turned to look, and sure enough, Aaron was wearing a casual T-shirt and jeans. His hands were in his pockets, and he was trailing lazily behind Mark.

The pose and the attitude were all too familiar.

"I remember you not liking sweets when you were a kid. When did you start liking strawberry cake?"

Mark asked the boy trailing behind him.

"It's a friend I haven't seen in a while who likes it." Aaron replied with a smile. "If she likes it, then I like it too."

Mark frowned slightly, not knowing what to do with his illegitimate son. He had brought Aaron to this

event to introduce him to the circle of prominent families, but the boy didn't leave him any dignity.

Upon seeing Percival arrive with the strawberry cake, Isolde chuckled. "I bet this cake is for Vivienne."

Fiona swept her gaze over Isolde as a smirk played on her lips.

After tonight's banquet, they, the third branch of the Ellington family, will probably change its tune.
They

might not want Vivienne as their daughter-in-law anymore, which would be a good thing for her. Having

someone who could cure the effects of the boar poison was a nuisance.

"How long are we supposed to wait for Vivienne to appear?" Paul sneered. He was growing more

impatient by the second. "Even my grandfather isn't this pompous on his birthday."

Percival's gaze hardened, and he cast a chilling glance at Paul. "Seems like I shouldn't have helped

you get your jaw back in place so quickly after the last time we met."

Paul cringed, and his mouth quickly snapped shut, but his eyes glittered with malicious intent.

"Scott, I think most of the guests have arrived, don't you think?" Mila had been hanging around Scott

since they entered the banquet hall, playing the part of the hostess and helping him greet guests.

Scott tried repeatedly to create distance between them, but she kept clinging on. Not wanting to make a scene, he let her be, but his brow furrowed deeply every time she spoke up.

Nevertheless, he glanced at Baron and Judith.

Baron nodded. "Yes, the guests have mostly arrived."

Scott signaled to the staff, and the music in the banquet hall immediately softened. Someone went to the lounge to notify Vivienne that it was time for her grand entrance.

The banquet hall had a two-story design. Scott, holding a microphone, stood on the staircase leading to the upstairs lounge. He cleared his throat gently, drawing the attention of all the guests.

"Ladies and gentlemen, tonight I'm hosting a reunion banquet for my daughter, Vivienne. Vivienne was lost for many years but has now finally been found and returned to our family. Tonight, I will formally introduce her to you all."

Many of the guests remembered that the daughter Scott had found was named Arabella. Why had there been a sudden change? Had she changed her name?

But nobody would be impolite enough to ask aloud. They simply craned their necks towards the

staircase leading to the lounge, waiting for the much-anticipated debut of the Brooks family's heiress.

They were all eager to lay eyes on her, offer a few compliments, build a rapport, and thus fulfill their purpose for attending the reunion banquet.

The banquet hall fell silent, save for the soft music floating in the air.

All eyes were glued to the staircase as they waited in silence.

But the seconds and then minutes ticked away. Nearly ten minutes of silence later, there was still no sign of Vivienne. An eerie silence enveloped the entire banquet hall.

Many started to wonder what was going on. Why wasn't she coming out?

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Baron's forehead was crunched up in worry.

He turned towards Scott, asking, "What's happening? Why hasn't Vivienne shown up yet?"

"I'm not sure." Scott glanced towards the staircase. "She should be out soon. Let's wait a bit longer."

Percival, with his deep-set and icy eyes, turned his gaze towards the lounge at the top of the staircase.

His stern face was devoid of any trace of emotion.

After a moment of silence, he gave out a command to Thomas. "Go check on her."

Thomas nodded. "Alright."

Just as Thomas was about to ascend the staircase, a shrill voice suddenly exclaimed, "Oh my God!

What's going on? Stardust is live streaming and claiming that the Brooks family's little princess is being promiscuous! What the hell? Isn't the Brooks family's little princess in the lounge?"

Thomas halted in his tracks, furrowing his brows at the speaker.

The speaker was Ashley's friend. Her eyes were widened in shock as she stared at her phone.

Upon hearing this, everyone quickly pulled out their phones to watch the live stream.

The title boldly read, "Shocking! The Brooks family's little princess caught in the act during her own banquet. For more details, tune in now!"

In the blink of an eye, the live stream was swarmed with viewers.

The host hadn't shown their face, and the live stream was pitch black. However, the flirtatious voices of a man and a woman could be heard clearly.

Even though the screen was black, the seductive voice of the woman bore a striking resemblance to Vivienne's.

"Oh my God!" Ashley instinctively scanned the room. "This can't be my cousin..."

She didn't dare finish her sentence. She was afraid of stirring up trouble and drawing attention to herself, so she immediately shut her mouth.

Although she hadn't spoken much to Vivienne, she could still recognize her voice.

The voice wasn't exactly like Vivienne's, but it was close enough to raise doubts.

What was going on?

Wasn't Vivienne supposed to be getting ready in the lounge?

How could she be doing such a thing?

And she was streaming it?!

Ever since Vivienne returned to the Brooks family and received everyone's adoration, Ashley had begun feeling a bit uncomfortable. But she could discern that Vivienne wouldn't do such a thing.

Could this be Vivienne's way of taking revenge against the family?

Was she seeking retaliation because Scott had mistaken Arabella for her?

"No wonder Ms. Vivienne has been refusing to come out. She's been too busy fooling around in the lounge."

"Tsk, ts. This Ms. Vivienne is quite something. Normally, people would do such things in secret, but

she's doing it out in the open. She's even broadcasting it. How much does she despise her family?"

"Maybe she's just lonely. I heard that Ms. Vivienne grew up in the countryside with no one to teach her any better. That's probably why she's doing such a shameless thing."

Amid the gossiping crowd, the large screen in the hotel's ballroom suddenly lit up.

The screen was connected to Stardust's live stream.

The voices from the live stream echoed through the ballroom's speakers, causing the faces of the guests to flush with embarrassment.

Especially the female guests.

Scott's face was visibly strained. Before he could say anything, Calista glanced at him. "Maybe

Vivienne isn't feeling well. Should we go check on her?" She slyly suggested.

No sooner had she spoken than she felt a chill coming from nearby.

She turned to see Percival's eyes narrowing. His gaze was as sharp as a blade, and it was aimed directly at her. His aura was seriously intimidating; it made him seem like a demon from hell who was ready to take a life at any moment.

Calista instinctively shivered, retracting her gaze and avoiding any further eye contact.

"Impossible!"

Richard was shaking with rage and gripping his cane tightly. "There's no way that's Vivienne! Who is trying to tarnish her reputation at her own banquet?!"

Whoever dared to pull such a stunt under his watch was asking for trouble!

Regardless of who tried to tarnish Vivienne's reputation, he would never believe it, let alone let it slide.

Percival's icy gaze shifted away from Calista. He stood up with his hands still in his pockets and scanned the room. His commanding presence silenced everyone.

But questions popped up.

Wasn't Percival supposed to be a nobody?

Why did he suddenly exude such a terrifying presence?

It was like he was ready to commit murder.

Percival withdrew his gaze and turned to Baron and Scott. "Baron, Scott, what do you think?"

"I, of course, believe that the person in the live stream isn't Vivienne." Baron was somewhat shocked by Percival's sudden display of authority and was momentarily at a loss for words.

Then it clicked.

Richard's grandson, especially his most cherished one, couldn't possibly be a nobody.

"Someone check this out! Who dares to frame my daughter at her own banquet?!" Scott suddenly

commanded, "Once we find out who it is, there will be no mercy!"

Scott was the head of the Brooks family, but he had handed over the business affairs to Ronald years

ago.

After retreating from the business world, he had lost his sharp edge.

But right now, he exuded a truly threatening aura.

Upon hearing their responses, Percival nodded in satisfaction. He removed a hand from his pocket and

casually adjusted his slightly creased sleeve cuff.

"Scott's word is enough. There's no need for you to investigate; I'll handle it. If someone plans to

sabotage my fiancée during her own banquet, they're not getting off easy."

He lifted his cold eyes, which were completely devoid of any warmth, to meet Scott's. "Wouldn't you

agree?"

Scott furrowed his brows. He pondered for a moment before finally speaking, "Vivienne is my daughter.

If anyone should defend her, it should be me." Scott's eyes met Percival's. His tone was neither cold

nor warm. "You're overstepping your bounds!"

He had no objections to Vivienne and Percival being together.

After all, the two were engaged, and as a father, he naturally had no objections.

But it was not acceptable for Percival to always try to show off in front of him.

Percival locked eyes with him. The shifting glimmer in their eyes was like a clash of swords.

After a moment, Percival's lips curved into a slight smirk. "Fine! I hope everyone is satisfied with the

outcome you bring about."

His voice was indifferent and devoid of warmth.

But after saying this, he gave Thomas a look.

Thomas immediately understood and began heading towards the lounge.

Scott retracted his gaze, gave him a quick glance, and then turned to the crowd. "My daughter would

never do such outrageous things. I will give everyone a satisfactory answer."

Just then, the live broadcast on the public screen suddenly resumed.

A dusky pink skirt flashed by. The diamond on it was so dazzling that it was actually blinding.

"Isn't the situation clear yet? The lady of the Brooks family is nowhere to be seen, while the woman in the live broadcast is wearing a dress that was specially made for her. Doesn't Mr. Brooks find this whole thing ludicrous?!"

"Is she not taking us seriously?! Why is the distinguished daughter of the Brooks family publicly behaving this way?!"

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The room was buzzing with conversation. The scales were tipping dramatically against Vivienne.

The people at this banquet were influential figures in Rivenwood. They were unaccustomed to such humiliation.

Percival surveyed the room as a storm brewed in the depths of his eyes.

Just as he was about to make a scene, a calm voice echoed from the staircase. "What exactly did I do to deserve this disrespect?"

All eyes were drawn to Vivienne. She was still in her casual attire and was strolling nonchalantly into the spotlight.

She glanced around the room. "Did I miss some sort of spectacle?"

Her appearance was like a thunderbolt. The crowd was left stunned.

She was clearly in the live video earlier, yet here she was, acting as if nothing was amiss, leaving everyone in a daze.

Before anyone could voice their confusion, the video feed shifted again.

The camera swung to the lounge, where Eddy was dressed in a designer dress. He was flushed and incoherent while seated in a chair.

Suddenly, someone burst into the room and grabbed Eddy, leading him away.

The crowd was utterly baffled.

What was happening?

Was that a kidnapping?

Why would anyone kidnap Eddy?

He was a spoiled rich kid with no money, and he certainly wasn't his father, Mark's favorite.

Even if they wanted to ransom him to Mark, he probably wouldn't pay.

"Wait! Isn't Eddy wearing Ms. Vivienne's dress?"

Finally, someone realized the anomaly and shouted it out.

Only then did everyone recall that, when Eddy was taken away, he was wearing a dress.

That dress had been showcased on the social media of the designer that the Brooks family had hired for this special occasion, generating a lot of envy.

So, everyone immediately recognized that Eddy was wearing the same dress from the designer's post.

Everybody was dumbfounded, and then someone finally shouted, "So, the kidnappers were actually after Ms. Vivienne? Eddy just got caught in the crossfire?"

"Is Vivienne cursed or something? How could Eddy come to a party and end up getting kidnapped?"

The Brooks family looked on as their faces turned ashen as the murmurs continued.

Suddenly, a disgruntled voice broke through the noise.

"What the hell does Eddy getting kidnapped have to do with Vivienne? Are you people just bored?"

Everyone turned towards the source of the voice to see three girls and two boys, all around eighteen or nineteen, coming in through the door.

They gave the crowd a scathing look before heading towards Vivienne, calling out in unison, "Ms.

Vivienne!”

Vivienne paused. “I thought you weren’t coming?”

For her banquet, the Brooks family had allowed her to invite her friends.

Considering her students from Class Eighteen had all performed well in their finals, she had promised

to arrange a dinner with Stephen for them and invited them all to come to the banquet.

Since the new school year was about to start, the students would be in Rivenwood anyway.

But all the students from Class Eighteen were tied up and couldn’t make it.

“It’s your reunion banquet, Vivienne. How could we possibly not come?” Faye said with a smile, “We all

wanted to surprise you, but there were too many of us, so we decided to send the five of us to

congratulate you.”

Vivienne looked at the five in front of her.

Charlotte, Faye, Coral, Logan, and Oberon.

Her normally indifferent heart softened slightly.

“Vivienne, congratulations on finding your birth family.” Charlotte smiled. “My grandma and parents

asked me to congratulate you on their behalf. My dad still says he owes you a meal. Once he’s in

Rivenwood, he promises to make it up to you.”

Vivienne smiled. “I’m looking forward to it.”

Just then, Doreen Baker and Egbert Churchill approached.

Egbert was the heir to the Churchill family.

Since the family patriarch was still in charge, Egbert hadn’t taken on the role of head of the family.

The almost fifty-year-old Egbert, dressed in a tailored suit and gold-rimmed glasses, didn’t have the sharp edge of a seasoned businessman like Scott.

Instead, he had the air of a refined gentleman.

Doreen, dressed in a high-end designer dress, looked even more elegant.

When they stopped in front of Vivienne, Doreen began speaking with a beaming smile on her face.

“Ms. Vivienne, we apologize for being late. Congratulations on finding your biological father.”

Although the Churchill family wasn’t one of the four major families, they held significant influence in Rivenwood.

Therefore, they had been invited to Vivienne’s banquet.

However, since their daughter, Faye, had also received an invitation from Vivienne and wanted to attend, they had to pick her up first. They ran into traffic on their way, which made them late.

“Thank you.” Vivienne replied with a polite smile.

Her smile was like a myriad of blossoms bursting into full bloom, stunning everyone present.

Who was it that said Ms. Vivienne was a country bumpkin? Did she look uncouth and clueless about etiquette?

Just from her casual conversation with Egbert and Doreen, one could see she was anything but.

“Ms. Vivienne cured my daughter.” Egbert adjusted his glasses as a smile played on his lips. “I’ve been wanting to thank her in person but never found the right moment. Maybe we could grab a burger sometime when you’re free?”

“Sure.”

After some light chit-chat, Vivienne excused herself to attend to some matters, telling them to make themselves at home.

Suddenly, Charlotte, her face turning icy, broke the friendly atmosphere. “Who was it that said Eddy’s kidnapping had to do with Ms. Vivienne? Stand up! Let me see if you have maggots or crap for brains.”

Charlotte had been a troublemaker for years. Her sharp tongue was always ready to cut at someone's dignity.

Faces around the room instantly darkened.

Unfazed by the crowd's reaction, Charlotte continued coldly, "That dressing room is Ms. Vivienne's.

Eddy, her cousin, not only intruded but also tried on her gown. Is he some sort of pervert who gets off by wearing women's clothes? How did he even squeeze into it without ripping it?"

"If he hadn't intruded into Ms. Vivienne's room, would he have been kidnapped? Can't you people even think straight?"

"Earlier, Ms. Vivienne was falsely accused of misconduct on the live stream, and then Eddy showed up.

Which of you half-wits came up with the idea that Ms. Vivienne kidnapped him? And what's with calling her 'cursed'? The only ones cursed here are you lot! Can't you tell right from wrong?!"

Charlotte's tirade stung, leaving many in the room visibly uncomfortable.

Paul, standing at the back, bore the brunt of it. He was one of those with ill intentions. He was planning to kidnap Vivienne amid the chaos, only for Eddy to make a complete fool of himself.

Worse still, his men had mistakenly kidnapped Eddy instead.

The nerve of that guy!

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Charlotte shot a glance at everyone present and muttered even more curses under her breath.

She then turned to Vivienne. "Vivienne, we Redwoods may not be a big name in Rivenwood, but I still have some standing here. If anyone dares to give you trouble, the Redwoods would be the first to take offense."

It wasn't just Charlotte speaking.

She had long considered Vivienne as her closest confidante. Even if she wasn't capable of much, she was willing to step forward for Vivienne whenever needed.

This was also a reminder of what her grandmother and parents had told her before they arrived in Rivenwood.

Vivienne had done her family a great favor, and they were known to repay their debts.

Her parents were concerned about Vivienne's situation with the Brooks family, so they asked her to speak up.

They had arrived late and were unaware of the drama that had unfolded in the banquet hall.

On the way, Logan caught a glimpse of a live stream claiming to show Vivienne. The moment they heard about it, they hurried over.

Arriving at the entrance of the banquet hall, they heard someone blaming Vivienne for Eddy's kidnapping. Charlotte couldn't hold back her anger.

Bullying Vivienne?

They would have to face the repercussions from the forty-odd students of Class Eighteen.

Vivienne smiled. "Alright."

She accepted the kindness of those who offered it, and she would return it in kind.

This sudden interruption left many of the invited guests at the banquet and the Brooks family themselves taken aback.

Scott was the first to regain his composure. "Vivienne, what just happened? Eddy..."

Vivienne turned her gaze toward him as her expression slowly returned to its cold indifference. "Mr.

Brooks, your nephew drugged my dress and prepared a man in advance."

After she said this, another shocking scene appeared on the large screen.

The image was clear. Eddy's face was covered in injuries, and he was engaged in a scandalous act with another man!

Screams of shock erupted from the younger girls in the room, who hastily covered their eyes.

The adults were visibly angry. "This is outrageous! How does the Miller family educate their children?!

Doing such acts in public is just...disgraceful!"

"Before this, I heard rumors about Eddy's secret preferences. I didn't expect him to not only have peculiar tastes but also a wicked sense of humor. Last time he live streamed himself doing a headstand while relieving himself, and now this... I'm speechless!"

"Report this! What kind of person does something like this? It's sick!"

Vivienne looked at the screen and was actually slightly shocked.

She raised her curious eyes to look at Percival, wondering if all this was his doing.

She had sensed the danger early on and had planned to let them take Eddy.

Draven was waiting outside for Eddy, and Eddy wouldn't have a good time if he was taken.

But she hadn't expected this to be live streamed again.

Percival raised an eyebrow. 'If they think they can harm you, they should be ready to face the

consequences.'

Vivienne was shockingly surprised by how swiftly he took revenge.

Alright then. Her Mr. Wolf was indeed quite cool.

Suddenly, she felt that relying on Mr. Wolf wasn't such a bad idea.

A shriek interrupted her thoughts.

"Eddy!"

Paula, who had been in a daze since seeing Vivienne come down from the upstairs and Eddy being taken away on the live stream, had finally snapped out of it.

She rushed towards Vivienne with eyes filled with resentment. "It was you, wasn't it? Why are you so heartless? He's your cousin! You already shamed him by forcing him to live stream before, and now you're still not letting him off?"

Paula tried to grab Vivienne, but Vivienne sidestepped her, causing Paula to stumble.

"Vivienne, I swear, I'll make you pay!" Paula angrily declared.

She then turned to a servant brought by the Miller family. "What are you standing there for? Go bring

the young master out!"

The servant quickly ran upstairs.

The sounds from the live stream became increasingly unbearable, making Paula both angry and

anxious. "Turn it off! Turn off the live stream!"

However, no one paid her any attention.

Paula ran over to the large screen, looking for the off button. She tried to turn off the live stream, but no

matter how hard she pressed, it wouldn't turn off.

She had forgotten that the live stream was being broadcast by Stardust, who wasn't even here. Even

worse, the camera in the dressing room was hidden.

Paula couldn't help but breakdown in tears.

She suddenly turned to Scott as her eyes filled with an all-encompassing hatred. "Scott! Look at this! It

was your precious daughter who set up my son like this! Are you just going to stand there and watch?

You caused me to lose Katara, and now your daughter is going to ruin my son too?

Where did I go wrong? I've always supported you in everything you wanted to do. But how have you

treated me in return?

Do you see how much your daughter has embarrassed Eddy?! Do you know how many people have seen this? How is he supposed to face anyone now? How am I supposed to face anyone?"

"Enough!"

Scott's voice was akin to the low growl of a tired and angry Pitbull. "You keep saying Vivienne set up

Eddy, so let me ask you a question. Why was he in Vivienne's dressing room? That room was for

Vivienne's makeup only; even Percival, her fiancé, hasn't entered it, but Eddy, her cousin, has?"

Scott's face was dark and frightening. "What was he doing in Vivienne's dressing room? Where did the

voice at the start of the live stream come from? Do you really think I've been so out of touch with our

family affairs all these years that I now don't have a brain?"

Baron and Judith stood to the side, watching Paula coldly without speaking.

It was clear to anyone with eyes that Eddy had tried to get back at Vivienne and had ended up falling

into a trap.

They brought this on themselves, and now Paula was trying to blame Scott?

"So, he can't go into her dressing room? Eddy is her cousin! Why can't he call her out of her room?"

Paula scoffed. "I see how it is now. You've never cared about us."

Paula glared at Vivienne and spoke in an ice-cold tone. "You wretch! It's all your fault! Why couldn't you

just stay in the countryside? Why did you come to Rivenwood? Why did you return to the Brooks

family? You're just a jinx! You're the reason why my Katara can't come back!"

Her voice rose with each accusation. She seemed to be teetering on the brink of hysteria.

Ashley, who was standing on the sidelines, finally couldn't bear it any longer. "Paula, don't you think

you're being a bit harsh?" She interjected. "Who doesn't have your back in our family? Aren't we

always giving way to you? And besides, if, as a cousin, I feel awkward entering my cousin's room, don't

you think it's even more inappropriate for a man to do so? You've been picking on Vivienne from the

start, and as for this incident, he got what was coming to him.

And more than that, this is Vivienne's home. Why shouldn't she be able to return? When Katara went

missing, it wasn't Vivienne's fault, so why are you blaming her? Aren't you being unfair?"

"Shut your mouth!" Paula snapped. "Who asked for your opinion?!"

"I'm just speaking the truth! Besides, you say Vivienne set up our cousin, Eddy, but do you have any

proof?" Ashley retorted defiantly.

"You!" Paula was momentarily speechless.

Did she have any proof?

Of course not.

This was supposed to be her weapon against Vivienne.

Why would she leave any proof behind?

"You don't have any proof! But I do!" Suddenly, Fiona, who had been silent all along, spoke up.

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Everyone turned to Fiona, looking dumbstruck.

What was going on?

Wasn't Percival Fiona's cousin?

Why was she siding with Paula against Vivienne?

Richard's face fell immediately. "Fiona, what nonsense are you talking about?"

Fiona gave them a slight smile, pulled out her phone, and played a recording.

The conversation between Paula and Stardust was clearly audible in the hall.

How Paula had bribed Stardust and planned to embarrass Vivienne at the family reunion was all

revealed.

Paula's face turned pale. She never would have thought that Fiona would record her conversation with

Stardust.

Especially since she had just assumed that Fiona was on her side.

Everyone was stunned.

"I can't believe Paula would be this malicious. After all, Ms. Vivienne is her niece. She even wanted to

ruin her niece's banquet."

"Paula once drugged Mark to marry him, causing Mark to break up with his fiancée. She has done such

things before, so it's not surprising that she would do it again."

"I wonder what Scott is going to do. On one hand is his sister; on the other is his daughter."

Paula was both angry and anxious as she listened to the conversations around her.

She hurriedly defended herself. "It wasn't me! That's not my voice! Fiona is framing me."

"SMACK!"

As soon as she finished speaking, Baron slapped her across the face. "With such clear evidence,

you're still trying to deny it?! It seems you didn't take my warning seriously last time!"

For this banquet, they considered Vivienne's feelings and prohibited Paula from attending.

But she had sneaked in anyway.

With so many people present today, he didn't want to make a scene because of Paula.

But who would have thought that she would go as far as to drug Vivienne's dress?

Baron used all his strength in that slap, so Paula's face instantly swelled.

She covered her face, angrily saying, "Dad! Why did you hit me? I've said it wasn't me! It was obviously

Vivienne harmed Eddy! You can't blame me just because of Vivienne!"

Then, Paula glared at Fiona. "Fiona is probably in cahoots with Vivienne. Who knows? This might be

Richard's doing! The Ellington family wants to suppress us and the Miller families, so they made up this recording to frame me!"

Fiona laughed. "I hadn't even met Vivienne before this banquet. How could we conspire to frame you?

Can you really say that? If you have doubts about this recording, you can inspect it. We, the Ellington family, don't need to bully an outsider like you."

Richard's face improved a lot after hearing the recording.

He was very satisfied with Fiona.

Compared to his other grandchildren, apart from Percival, Fiona was the one who pleased him the most.

Members of the Ellington family should present a united front.

Percival cast a deep gaze on Fiona.

Paula was somewhat flustered. How could she inspect it? That was obviously her in the recording.

If she inspected it, wouldn't she be admitting her guilt?

At that moment, Eddy was brought out from Vivienne's dressing room by the Miller family's servant, causing Stardust's live stream to also shut down.

Seeing this, Paula hurried over. "Eddy, are you okay? Can you tell me what happened? Why were you in Vivienne's dressing room? Did she kidnap you?"

After saying this, she gave Eddy a complete once-over.

The effects of the drug had completely worn off after his encounter with the man.

He was now clear-headed, but every time he thought about what he had done with a man...

Ugh!

He quickly ran to a corner, found a trash can, and vomited violently.

When he felt a little better, Eddy charged over with a face that looked like he wanted to kill Vivienne.

"You wretch! I'll kill you!"

With that, he charged at Vivienne.

Vivienne stood still and looked at him indifferently with her hands in her pockets.

Percival quickly stepped in front of Vivienne.

At the same time, Scott and Leopold rushed over.

Leopold aimed a kick at Eddy, targeting his special place.

Caught off guard, Eddy let out a yell and hopped around clutching himself.

Scott roared. "Bastard!"

Scott's fury startled Eddy. He hadn't seen his uncle be angry in a long time and was momentarily

scared stiff.

Scott's eyes were filled with a burning rage as he glared at Eddy. "I haven't settled the score with you

for framing Vivienne, and now you dare lay a hand on her in public? Do you really think I'm dead?"

"Uncle, I..." Eddy fell into a sudden panic. He was about to explain when Scott yelled, "Tie him up and hand him over to the police! Tell the police that we do not accept any mediation!"

Vivienne, who had been watching coldly from the side, raised her eyes slightly, and her lips curled into an indifferent smile.

She was laughing, but nothing about her smile was genuine.

"No!" Paula shrieked. "Brother, you can't do this to Eddy! He's your nephew! You caused me to lose Katara, so you can't let me lose Eddy too!"

"Shut up!" Scott commanded coldly, "Because of Katara, I have been tolerating you, but that's not a reason for you to bully Vivienne again and again! You lost your daughter, so you take it out on mine?"

What kind of logic is that?"

He felt guilty about and responsible for Katara's loss.

Over the years, he had been secretly and openly supporting Paula, helping her resolve numerous issues. He figured that he had done enough.

"But you still owe me! I don't care! You once promised me a favor, and I want you to let Eddy go!" Paula knew that the situation had escalated to a point where nobody would believe her innocence.

The evidence was indisputable.

If Scott were to dig deeper, he would undoubtedly find her connection to Stardust.

Instead of framing Vivienne, she decided to prioritize protecting Eddy.

Scott furrowed his brows. He had completely forgotten about the promise he made to Paula years ago.

He paused for a moment and turned to glance at Vivienne.

She was looking back at him. Her face was an unreadable mixture of smiles and seriousness.

Those crystal-clear eyes seemed capable of seeing through everything. It pierced straight into his heart, revealing his true intentions.

"Vivienne, I...."

Scott was about to speak when a few uniformed officers walked in.

They flashed their badges and continued to professionally address why they had arrived. "Eddy, we need you to come with us. There have been reports of you streaming inappropriate content. Please come with us to assist in our investigation."

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As soon as Eddy heard this, he panicked. "No! I'm not going!"

Last time, he also ended up at the police station because of a scandalous live-streaming incident. If he got arrested again, it would be his second round in the slammer.

Worse still, the last time he was arrested, his father brought back Aaron, his illegitimate half-brother.

If he got arrested again, he feared his father would give up on him entirely and start grooming Aaron as his successor.

How could Aaron deserve that?

The cops, however, weren't about to let Eddy refuse so easily.

Before he knew it, they had grabbed him.

But somehow, Eddy managed to shake off the cops and, with eyes burning with fury, charged at

Vivienne. "Bitch! It's all your fault! If I'm going down, I'm taking you with me!"

But as he lunged at her, Percival, who had been shielding Vivienne, swiftly stepped aside.

Vivienne raised her foot and kicked Eddy hard.

Caught off guard, Eddy fell to the ground.

The cops were about to subdue him when he spotted a fruit knife on a nearby table. In a flash, he

lunged for it and thrust it at Vivienne.

But Vivienne stood her ground, not moving an inch.

Leopold, alarmed, was about to intervene when Percival stopped him. "Hold it!"

Before Leopold could react, Vivienne moved.

In one swift motion, she launched a fast and powerful attack on Eddy.

Her soft-looking fists carried a massive force.

She launched blow after blow at Eddy, and Leopold, standing close, could clearly hear the sound of

Eddy's bones cracking.

Suddenly, he understood.

Vivienne kicked Eddy to the ground, casually wiped her hands with a wet wipe from the table, and

looked at the cops. "Was I acting in self-defense?"

Everyone was stunned.

They hadn't expected Vivienne, such a beautiful woman, to be so skilled in combat.

The police, taken aback for a moment, nodded. "Yes. You were acting in self-defense."

A radiant smile spread across Vivienne's face. "Then I'll leave him to you. I'll provide evidence of his

and Paula's attempt to drug me."

Her face was expressionless as she said, "I won't accept a settlement."

The police were puzzled. "Drugging?"

Their report only mentioned Eddy's inappropriate behavior on a live stream. There was no mention of any drugging.

Vivienne's lips curled up slightly as she glanced at Scott. "Seems like you only got part of the report.

Then please take Paula as well. I accuse her of drugging my dress and attempting to have me raped and sold."

The police immediately became serious. Human trafficking was something they had to seriously deal with.

The lead officer approached Paula. "Miss Paula, please come with us."

Before Paula could react, she was taken away by the police.

The room fell silent as Eddy and Paula were led out.

They looked at Vivienne with new respect.

The lady of the Brooks family was not to be underestimated.

She was certainly more formidable than Arabella.

Mark felt humiliated. His wife and son had been arrested for attempting to harm Vivienne.

Tomorrow's headlines would certainly be interesting.

He had no idea how to explain this to the elders of the Miller family.

Mark looked at the young woman standing nearby.

She stood among the crowd, radiating an aura of strength and power. One glance at her was enough to draw anybody's attention.

He didn't know why the young master of the Nine Mystics Society had become the lady of the Brooks family. But he knew that he needed to provide her with a satisfactory answer.

Otherwise, the Miller family was in danger.

Paula's drama had ruined the party atmosphere.

Mila surveyed the room, then walked over to Scott. "Let me play a piece on the piano to lighten the mood."

Dressed in a custom-made gown, she exuded a refined elegance.

She was the one who was least amused. She needed to do something before Vivienne stole all the limelight.

Renowned pianist Debra was also invited to the banquet.

Many guests were piano enthusiasts, so Mila's offer to play the piano attracted a lot of interest.

As Mila took the stage, Scott approached Vivienne. "I'm sorry, Vivienne. I didn't expect your cousin to do something like this. Don't worry, my father won't let him go this time."

Vivienne looked at Scott for a long time before finally saying, with a slight smile, "Overconfidence can be dangerous, Mr. Brooks. I'm not Arabella. Play with fire, and the entire Brooks family might get burned."

Scott froze as his eyes locked with Vivienne's. Those icy, penetrating eyes were just like the ones he used to know. They saw right through him, just like Karen's did.

She was so much like Karen.

Her intelligence and her aloofness were all so reminiscent of Karen.

"I promise you, Vivienne, this won't ever happen again." Scott said, averting his gaze.

Vivienne scoffed. "How many times have you made that promise, Mr. Brooks? Your word is worthless!"

With that, she ignored him.

Scott's expression stiffened. "Why don't you find a place to sit down for a bit? I need to entertain the guests. After that, I'll introduce you to some esteemed guests."

Without waiting for Vivienne's response, he hurried off.

Percival moved to Vivienne's side, taking her hand in his. Despite the warm August weather, her hand was as cool as a spring. He wrapped his other arm around her slender waist and murmured into her ear, "You let Eddy off too easily."

Vivienne glanced back at him as her eyes narrowed slightly with a mischievous glint in their depths.

"Did I?"

Chapter 278

Vivienne glanced meaningfully towards the entrance.

Percival smirked. "Even breaking his arms and legs won't be enough."

Eddy lunged at Vivienne, but Percival held back. He watched as Vivienne's silver needle plunged into Eddy's flesh.

He wasn't a doctor, so he didn't know where the needle had hit, but after watching the man go mad, he

had to admit that Vivienne had quite the skill.

In front of everyone, Scott decided to hand Eddy over to the police.

To outsiders, he appeared to be a righteous man who was willing to turn against his own family for the sake of his daughter. But Percival saw through it. Scott wanted to save Eddy.

Once Eddy was in police custody, his life would be spared.

Vivienne must have seen it too; that was why she decided to take matters into her own hands.

Having been with Vivienne for so long, he knew she didn't want blood on her hands, which was why she only crippled Eddy.

But this punishment was far too lenient.

Vivienne looked up at him as a smile suddenly spread across her face. "You only saw me breaking his arms and legs, but did you not notice that I fed him my specially prepared poison?"

Percival froze. He hadn't noticed.

Vivienne chuckled but said nothing more.

She had fed Eddy her special poison, shadowfall, when she attacked him.

This poison was refined from a hundred different toxic herbs. It was colorless and tasteless.

Shadowfall wouldn't instantly kill a person. Instead, it would slowly take over their body. It would feel

like a million bugs were gnawing away at them, ultimately affecting their brain and slowly turning them into a lunatic.

Moreover, no medical method could detect the presence of this poison.

At that moment, Percival handed her a piece of strawberry cake. She took a bite and said nonchalantly,

"Soon, he'd be wishing for death."

The hard part was wanting to die but not being able to.

At the moment, the sound of a piano started to fill the room.

Mila had chosen a rather cheerful piece for the evening.

Perhaps because of the incident that had just transpired, she decided to lighten up the atmosphere with her music.

Mila was indeed a skilled pianist. However, to a connoisseur, something was missing in her performance, especially in comparison to Debra's.

"Mila sure knows how to play the piano. She's a famous pianist, after all. Not to mention, she's

incredibly talented and beautiful. When she stood with Scott earlier, they looked like the perfect couple." Someone in the crowd commented.

Most of them could only appreciate the beauty of the music but couldn't discern its imperfections.

"Isn't it? I heard that she hasn't remarried since her divorce from William Pendleton. The only man she's been close to is Scott. Don't you think she's into him?"

"You didn't know? It's not exactly a secret that she's into Scott. It's just that Scott hasn't made any moves."

"In my opinion, since Scott is still single and Mila is clearly into him, he might as well marry her.

Especially since a beautiful and talented woman like Mila is hard to come by. Plus, she just helped save this banquet. She really does fit the part of the lady of the house."

"Wouldn't that mean that Vivienne will have a new mom soon?"

The whispers from the crowd grew louder. Mila, who was playing the piano, couldn't help but smile at the comments. She was rather pleased with herself, so she didn't even notice a few wrong notes.

Calista, standing by the side, looked at Vivienne with a hint of malice and resentment in her eyes.

So, what if she was Mr. Percy's fiancée?

So, what if she was the Brooks family's young miss?

As long as her mother married Scott, she'd be the lady of the house, and Vivienne would have to live by her rules.

It was a known fact that stepmothers were hard to deal with, and being a stepdaughter was even harder. Especially when you have to live under the thumb of your stepmother.

Vivienne heard the whispers and lifted her cool eyes to look at the confident Mila on the stage.

She wanted to be her mother?

She'd have to see if she was even qualified to have such a thought.

Aside from her own mother, only Cordelia Wilson had the right to be called her mother.

Mila?

Who did she think she was?

Vivienne put down her cake and headed towards the stage.

She pulled up a chair and sat next to Mila.

Mila was taken aback since she was still playing. She almost stopped when she saw Vivienne.

Her brows furrowed as she wondered what Vivienne was up to.

Was she planning to play with her?

Could this country girl even play the piano?

Did she even understand music?

She hoped she wasn't planning on ruining her performance.

With these thoughts in mind, Mila abruptly stopped playing and looked at Vivienne. "Vivienne, what do you think you're doing?"

Vivienne gave her a glance. "Ms. Mila, playing by yourself seems a bit monotonous; how about I join you?"

The Brooks family was taken aback.

They knew Vivienne was a good pianist. She was, at the very least, better than Mila.

But why was she suddenly in the mood to play with Mila?

On the other side, Cecilia knew of Vivienne's talent, but the rest of the Ellington family didn't. Some were gleeful, hoping to see Vivienne make a fool of herself, while others were worried.

Mila frowned. "Vivienne, even though you're Scott's daughter, there's a time and place for everything.

Your family just went through a scandal, and I'm trying to save your banquet. What do you think you're doing?"

Calista's face had darkened as well. She immediately chimed in. "Vivienne, playing the piano isn't as easy as you think. It's not about hitting a few random keys. Please step aside and stop disturbing my mother."

Vivienne's icy gaze swept over Mila and Calista. She didn't bother to respond; instead, she placed her hands on the piano keys as her fingers slowly and gracefully tapped out a melody.

She continued with the song that Mila had left unfinished.

But her tone and rhythm were far superior to Mila's.

Her speed was even faster, making the song sound more upbeat and uplifting.

The melodious tune filled the hall, and everyone felt their minds clearing and their moods improving slightly.

Mila and Calista were completely stunned.

What was happening?

How could this country bumpkin play the piano?

Vivienne turned her head and saw Mila's dumbfounded expression. "Aren't you going to play?" She indifferently asked.

Vivienne's question brought Mila out of her daze. After hearing Vivienne's rendition, a sense of panic unexpectedly rose in her heart.

Vivienne was just too good.

She felt that her own skills were nowhere near comparable.

But with everyone watching her, if she didn't play, her reputation as a pianist would be tarnished.

Mila hesitated for a moment, then plucked up the courage to play alongside Vivienne.

But the first note she played was wrong.

Her mistake was glaringly obvious, and it clashed horribly with Vivienne's harmonious piano playing.

Chapter 279

Mila's face had darkened with shame. The confident look on her face was shattered.

She couldn't keep up with Vivienne?!

How could that be possible?

Meanwhile, down in the audience, the people who had been engrossed in Vivienne's performance all

simultaneously furrowed their brows.

They looked at Mila with very annoyed, even sort of disgusted, expressions.

"What the heck is Mila playing?! Couldn't she even get the first note right?"

"She's a renowned pianist, and she can't even outshine Vivienne, a country girl? What's the point of her

playing at all? She should just go home, get married, and become a housewife!"

"Hurry up and get off the stage! We want to hear Vivienne!"

Everyone chattered as Mila's face slowly turned a ghastly pale.

No! She couldn't lose to Vivienne!

If she lost, how could she ever become the matriarch of the Brooks family?

How could she handle Vivienne?

She took a deep breath, tried to regain her composure, and lifted her hand to catch up with Vivienne's

rhythm.

However, although she managed to keep up with the first note, she struggled a lot with everything else.

Vivienne seemed to be pressing her down, and she felt weaker and weaker as she played. She even

made another mistake in the middle of the piece.

When the piece ended, Mila felt as if she were soaked in sweat.

She didn't even have a bit of strength left.

Vivienne stood up and looked down at her from a superior position. "Mila, your piano skills need more practice. As for becoming the matriarch, you might as well forget that. You'd need to practice for a hundred years just to be considered."

Mila felt even more shame now.

Although everyone knew she wanted to marry Scott, no one had ever spoken about it openly.

Vivienne not only brought it up in public but also used her piano skills to make her lose dignity.

Was she telling her not to dream of becoming the matriarch of the Brooks family?

Ridiculous!

Who was she to decide that she could not become Scott's wife?

Vivienne had no right to even speak on this!

The audience gasped in shock.

They had already seen that Vivienne was not to be messed with.

Now, they realized that not only was Vivienne intimidating, but she also had a bad temper.

She was someone who could shame you in public without a hint of remorse.

Just because she didn't want Mila to be her stepmother, she openly shamed Mila in front of all the prestigious guests.

Mila probably wanted to crawl into a hole and die right now.

As for the Brooks family, Baron and Scott watched the scene as their thoughts raced.

Scott naturally never thought of marrying Mila, but he never expected Vivienne to have such a strong reaction to the matter of Mila wanting to marry him.

"Humph!" Carl suddenly snorted coldly. "She's just a nobody who's trying to act important. A newly found daughter wanting to control her own father's love life?"

He had been brooding over the fact that he had been tricked by Vivienne into bidding 12 million dollars for a worthless gemstone.

Vivienne was just as annoying as Arabella, especially in his eyes.

Moreover, he hoped that his uncle, Scott, could find a wife and start his life anew.

In terms of talent and appearance, he thought Mila was perfectly suitable.

Most importantly, Calista was excellent.

He liked to interact with excellent people, not with barbaric creatures like Vivienne.

While everyone's thoughts were drifting, Vivienne turned her head and looked at all the guests at her banquet.

"Today is my family reunion banquet. To thank the Brooks family, I plan to play a solo." She declared.

Without giving anyone a chance to refuse, she sat down again and started playing.

Mila had no dignity to stay seated and quickly stood up.

She walked over to Calista and glared at Vivienne on stage with a blazing fury.

Vivienne was wearing jeans and a T-shirt. So, in truth, she looked a bit out of place while sitting in front of the piano.

But as she began playing the piano, everyone's emotions were stirred, and they were drawn into her dream-like piano world.

Her melody was initially gentle and clear. It created a fairyland, leading everyone into a beautiful picture.

Suddenly, her tempo gradually became aggressive, as if a storm were rising. The dream-like scenery shifted, as if everyone in the fairyland had been dragged into hell. They were helpless and terrified, and they couldn't help but scream as numerous emotions bombarded their hearts.

Soon, they felt like something was tightly choking their necks, making it hard for them to breathe. It was like death had arrived and was standing right before them, leaving them completely terrified.

They wanted to break free but found that no matter how hard they tried, they couldn't escape death's grip.

Despair!

Everyone fell into unprecedented despair.

Tears of regret streamed down everyone's face.

Percival, from the audience, looked at Vivienne on stage as a flash of surprise crossed his deep and alluring eyes.

This was the world-renowned piece called "One Step to Heaven, One Step to Hell."

The sounds of the piano struck his heart, suddenly squeezing it with a tight grip.

What had she experienced all these years to be able to play such a mournful and harrowing melody?

He abruptly stepped forward and walked towards Vivienne.

He wanted to play with her and soothe her sadness.

At this moment, Debra, who had been in the resting room, suddenly rushed out and looked at Vivienne in disbelief.

She was playing the piano again.

He hadn't heard her play for a long time.

He suddenly felt inspired.

He quickly rushed towards Vivienne, and before Percival could, he sat next to her as his fingers began dancing on the piano keys.

Percival stopped. His deep eyes narrowed, and a chilling frost appeared on his austere face.

How dare he sit next to his Vivienne?

He was about to step forward and pull Debra off when Debra's playing suddenly began, seamlessly blending with Vivienne's.

After Debra's relatively soft melody joined her sorrowful and desperate sound, the style of the song

slowly changed. It began to feel like a slowly flowing stream.

Percival was upset, but in the end, he didn't step forward.

With Debra joining in, everyone felt as if they had been pulled back from despair. They now found themselves back in the dream-like fairyland.

When the piece ended, it took a long time for everyone to slowly come back to their senses.

Everyone looked at Vivienne, seemingly forgetting how to speak.

Mila, Calista, and the others were completely dumbfounded.

They never thought that Vivienne could be this talented at playing the piano.

At this moment, someone suddenly shouted, "Moonlight! She's Master Moonlight!"

"Absolutely! It's Moonlight! This piece is Moonlight's 'One Step to Heaven, One Step to Hell.' It tells the story of her blissful past when her mother was still with her and her despair during the dark times after she passed. My God! Moonlight hasn't released any new music in years; I didn't expect to hear this today."

"Moonlight's piano pieces are truly extraordinary. I felt as if I were right there experiencing her despair."

"Who said that Ms. Vivienne is a country bumpkin who doesn't understand anything? This is Moonlight's music, for heaven's sake! Her compositions are out of this world! How can you say she doesn't understand anything?"

There might be people here who don't understand the piano, but there was absolutely no one who hadn't heard of Moonlight.

She was a legend in the world of music, and every one of her compositions had won international acclaim.

Unfortunately, Moonlight kept a low profile and didn't attend any events, so no one knew what she looked like.

Those who previously looked down on Vivienne, were completely taken aback.

No one would have guessed that Vivienne was none other than the masterful Moonlight.

Especially Carl. He was utterly dumbfounded.

Scott looked at Vivienne like he was in a daze. So many things were running through his mind.

Chapter 280

The room was buzzing with excitement. All the guests were completely captivated by Vivienne's piano performance.

Mila was left speechless. She initially wanted to dominate the room with her status and show that she was destined to become the Brooks family's matriarch, but Vivienne stole the show.

Debra, who had performed with her, stood up as a rare smile crossed his lips. "I never thought I'd have the chance to perform with you."

He reached out to shake Vivienne's hand, but before he could even touch her, Percival, standing next to her with a cold face, blocked him.

Percival raised his eyebrows slightly and exuded a menacing aura. This alone was enough for Debra to get the message, but he added, "Watch your tone. Don't touch my fiancée."

The word 'fiancée' was stressed heavily.

Even if one lacked perception, they could hear his strong possessiveness toward Vivienne from his unfriendly tone.

Leopold clicked his tongue twice.

Percival was jealous.

But Vivienne was the one who was impressive.

Vivienne glanced at Percival and calmly explained, "He's my friend."

Percival kept his brows furrowed and remained silent.

However, he felt like their relationship wasn't as simple as that.

This was the Brooks family's territory, and Debra didn't want to overstay his welcome.

After taking notice of Percival's strong stance, he nodded at Vivienne. "We'll catch up when we have time."

He left for backstage after saying this, leaving Percival pondering the meaning of 'catch up.'

Vivienne's impromptu piano performance on stage had captured everyone's attention, successfully diverting attention from the previous drama.

The banquet continued, with people constantly coming over to engage her in conversation.

"Vivienne, I never thought I'd have the privilege to hear a performance from the master Moonlight. Your performance was truly mesmerizing."

"Here's my card. Could I invite you for a drink sometime?"

Vivienne declined all of these invitations.

She just wanted to show Mila that she wasn't fit to be her stepmother.

She didn't care for their flattery.

"Vivienne." While she was busy handling the crowd, Fiona approached her with a glass of champagne.

"Hi, I'm Percival's cousin, Fiona."

Vivienne looked up at her as her cold eyes suddenly filled with a strange curiosity.

Was it her imagination?

She felt a sense of familiarity with this person, as if she had seen her somewhere before.

"Cousin?" Vivienne retracted her gaze and politely greeted her.

Fiona nodded. "I'm glad that you weren't affected by the previous incident. Otherwise, I would feel

guilty."

Vivienne's eyes lowered, and her face remained expressionless.

She could have handled the previous drama herself.

Fiona had provided a recording as evidence, which only added fuel to the fire, leaving Paula with no

room to argue.

However, how genuine was Fiona's recording? That was hard to say.

If Fiona really wanted to help her, she wouldn't have waited until Paula had caused such a commotion before revealing the recording.

Vivienne didn't show any doubt on her face; she simply said, "Thank you for your help just now."

"It was a small matter. I just happened to overhear their conversation and recorded it in case it would be harmful to you. I didn't expect it to come in handy." Fiona's act was flawless.

Vivienne's deep eyes slightly narrowed, and the corners of her lips slowly lifted, but still her expression remained unreadable.

She just happened to overhear and record it for her benefit?

Ha! What a joke!

Suddenly!

She remembered why Fiona felt familiar.

It was her voice.

Fiona's voice was similar to that of the woman who had asked for the boar poison that day.

Back then, Isolde had been poisoned in Percival's place, but who had intended to poison him in the first place was never mentioned. She didn't know if it was because he couldn't find out or if he had

intentionally let it go.

She suddenly remembered that Percival had announced at the engagement party that he had recovered from his disability.

At that time, many people from the Ellington family had come, so almost all the members of the four branches of the Ellington family were present.

Thus, the person who poisoned Percival was from the Ellington family.

An unknown emotion began to well up in her gut as Vivienne's gazed at Fiona.

After exchanging a few more pleasantries, Percival came over.

Upon seeing Fiona chatting with Vivienne, a dark light flashed in his ink-colored pupils, and his lips slightly curled into a subtle smirk. He nodded towards her., "Sis."

Fiona was the eldest girl of the Ellington family's grandchildren. Other than Paul, everyone else called her 'sis.'

Fiona smiled. "Percival, you're here? Vivienne just came to Rivenwood, so there might be a lot of things she's not used to. You should accompany her more. After I finish handling my studio work in the

next couple of days, I'll invite you two over for dinner."

Percival nodded. "Alright."

After that, Fiona excused herself to meet a friend and left.

After she left, Vivienne looked up at Percival and suddenly said, "Cunning fox."

Percival lightly pinched her nose. "If I'm a cunning fox, you're a little vixen. We make a perfect pair."

Vivienne smiled and didn't say anything else.

Some things didn't need to be said. They understood each other.

"Vivienne!"

At this moment, a handsome young man in casual attire came running over excitedly and began

sticking close to Vivienne. It was Aaron.

The reason he came here with Mark was all because of Vivienne. Otherwise, even if Mark begged, he

wouldn't have agreed.

Now that he finally saw Vivienne, he naturally stuck to her like glue, just like he used to before.

Vivienne recognized the person and raised her eyebrows slightly. "When did you get here?"

She was so busy dealing with Eddy that she didn't notice Aaron's arrival.

It had been a while since she last saw Aaron, but she remembered him well. After all, he had once participated in tournaments under her guidance. He was a promising player in her eyes.

"I've been here for a bit. I saw you were busy, so I didn't want to disturb you." Aaron replied.

Eddy and Paula were ganging up on Vivienne. He wanted to intervene, but when he saw that Vivienne had everything under control, he decided to stay back.

"Mmm." Vivienne nodded in understanding.

"Vivienne." Aaron, deviating from his usual calm demeanor, called out to her sweetly. "You have to come back to our team this time and lead us in the tournaments again."

He couldn't forget the times when he and Vivienne had fought side by side, guiding their team to a seven-championship winning streak.

Unfortunately, Vivienne left early. Since then, their team had aged. Their reaction times had slowed, and their performance had declined.

If it weren't for the new ruling that E-sports players had to be at least eighteen to participate in tournaments, they would have been clobbered by the younger generation.

"We'll talk about it later." Vivienne said as her eyebrows furrowed slightly.

Aaron was a promising player, but a good player needed a good team for guidance. The current members of his team were no longer suitable partners for him. They served only as a hindrance to him.

However, it wasn't surprising that Aaron, out of loyalty, chose to stay with his team.

But she didn't want to lead a team again.

After seeing Aaron's eager face, she knew that if she refused him directly, he would likely keep pestering her.