

## **Million-Dollar 281**

### Chapter 281

Percival stood aside, listening to their familiar chatter with a look of utter displeasure on his face.

He had thought Aaron looked familiar from the moment he laid eyes on him, but he couldn't quite place where he'd seen him before.

Now that Aaron and Vivienne were standing together, it became abundantly clear. The young man was practically a male carbon copy of Vivienne in his choice of attire.

They were both clad in casual t-shirts and jeans, which was a stark contrast to the formal attire of everyone else at the banquet.

Without having been told, one could easily mistake them for a couple. Their outfits were perfectly coordinated.

"Vivienne." Percival squeezed out through gritted teeth while draping an arm around Vivienne's shoulders. "Is this another one of your friends?"

The word 'another' was dripped with an undeniable hint of jealousy.

How many other friends did she have that he didn't know about?

And why were they all male friends?

Vivienne didn't attempt to shake off Percival's arm. She instead offered him a small, nonchalant laugh.

"Yes. A friend." She confirmed.

She then turned to Aaron, introducing Percival with a straightforward, "My fiancé."

Percival was taken aback by her blunt honesty. He was pleasantly surprised that she had acknowledged him and their relationship so openly.

Feeling reassured by Vivienne's acknowledgment, he tightened his hold around her and greeted Aaron with a beaming smile. "Nice to meet you. I'm Percival."

His attitude towards Aaron did a complete 180, all thanks to Vivienne's honesty.

Aaron's gaze darted between the pair as his eyes dimmed with an array of complex emotions.

News of Vivienne and Percival's engagement was not widely known. Only a select few within their inner circle were aware.

The media had only reported on Percival's engagement, describing his fiancé as a simple country girl.

The news of their engagement in Havenwood had been suppressed.

But Aaron knew. He knew that it was Vivienne who was engaged to Percival.

A bitter and sour taste spread through his mouth.

In his eyes, Vivienne deserved the best. She needed to be with the most outstanding man ever.

Percival just didn't measure up.

He thought that Vivienne didn't care about the engagement, so he hadn't expected her to take it so seriously now.

Even though she had introduced Percival in a casual manner, the term 'fiancé' felt like a thorn, pricking uncomfortably at his most tender spots.

He shook off his thoughts and greeted Percival politely. "Hello, sir, I'm Aaron."

His greeting was cordial, yet it still carried a hint of provocation.

He was only eighteen.

Vivienne was just nineteen.

And Percival... Well, he could easily pass for their uncle.

He wanted to emphasize the age gap between them to Percival.

Percival's smile froze, and his eyes narrowed dangerously.

Just as Aaron was reveling in his perceived victory, the cold intensity in Percival's eyes stopped him

dead in his tracks.

It was a familiar feeling. The sense of distance between them was palpable. It seemed as vast as an ocean.

A sense of panic washed over Aaron as he quickly redirected his gaze to Vivienne, attempting to change the subject. "Vivienne, about rejoining the team..."

He was hoping for a definitive answer from Vivienne.

Vivienne cut him off, gently disentangling herself from Percival's arm. "I'll think about it."

Seeing that Vivienne was considering his offer, Aaron's spirits lifted. It was as if a weight had been lifted from his shoulders.

"Vivienne, if you return, I promise to meet any conditions you have!" He exclaimed enthusiastically.

He knew his promise didn't hold much weight, but he wasn't about to let go of any possible opportunity.

Vivienne merely hummed in response, leaving Aaron to his own interpretations. Meanwhile, Percival watched the exchange with a dark expression on his face. He was clearly not thrilled.

He could see through Aaron's thinly veiled intentions, especially after he had almost nabbed the last

strawberry cake.

Whether he truly enjoyed the dessert or had taken it to impress Vivienne, the answer was crystal clear.

The thought sent a wave of displeasure through Percival, and his gaze grew colder by the second.

He wouldn't allow anyone to covet what was his. However, since it was something Vivienne had agreed to, he wouldn't openly oppose it.

"Percival." Thomas approached quietly, speaking in hushed tones, "Richard isn't feeling well. He would like to leave."

Vivienne's family reunion banquet was nearing its end. All formalities had been completed, and all necessary appearances had been made.

Given Richard's ailing health, there was no reason for him to continue to push himself.

"Take my car." Percival instructed him. "Drive Richard home."

Thomas nodded in understanding and went off to carry out Percival's command.

Aaron had a whole list of things he wanted to discuss with Vivienne, but given Percival's presence, he had to tone it down. "Vivienne, everyone misses you. Why don't we all get together for a meal next time?"

Upon hearing Aaron's suggestion, Percival's mood soured even further. Yet Vivienne seemed oblivious to this, and she readily agreed. "Sure."

Aaron's heart leapt at her response, and after a brief chat, he took his leave.

Once he was gone, Vivienne turned to Percival. "Mr. Wolf, I'm tired."

The reunion had been a long and tiring affair. It was filled with all sorts of drama, leaving her feeling exhausted.

Upon hearing that she was tired, Percival immediately signaled to Leopold, intending to head home.

"Let's go then."

Before they left, they bid Baron and Scott farewell.

"That's fine." Scott did not object. "A lot happened today, but don't let it weigh on your mind."

"No matter what happens, the Brooks family and Hawthorn clan will stand by you. After all, you're one of us now." He added with a grandiose air.

Vivienne's eyes narrowed slightly as she let out an indifferent "mmm."

"Today, we let you down." Baron began. "The matter with Eddy is settled. From now on, no one will

dare cross you."

Baron despised the underhanded tactics Paula and Eddy used, but they were his daughter and grandson, so he could only go so far in chastising them.

Vivienne's lips curled into an enigmatic smile. She responded nonchalantly, turned, left the banquet hall with Percival, and climbed into Leopold's car.

"I can go home by myself." Vivienne announced when Percival insisted on accompanying her.

"It's on my way." Percival countered as he raised an eyebrow. He was not going to miss this rare opportunity to spend time with her.

Leopold, who was driving, twitched his lips at this.

On his way?

The two places were an hour's drive apart at least. There was nothing 'on the way' about it.

Percival was clearly just shamelessly trying to make an excuse to be with Vivienne.

Leopold shuddered at the thought of how the other eight disciples would react to Percival if they knew about this.

Wait.

Why was he worrying about Percival?

He should be worried about himself.

He was, after all, Percival's accomplice.

Once in the car, Vivienne settled into the back seat and closed her eyes to rest.

She didn't need to be constantly on guard when she was with Percival. She could relax and completely let her guard down.

As he watched her lightly closed eyes, her eyelashes began fluttering with every movement of the car.

Soon, Percival began feeling his own heart flutter.

Ten minutes into the drive, Leopold's phone suddenly rang.

His face changed as he listened to the call. He quickly pulled over to the roadside emergency lane,

turned to Percival anxiously, and blurted out, "Percival, we've got a problem!"

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The affection in Percival's eyes disappeared in an instant, and Vivienne abruptly opened her eyes wide.

"What happened?"

Leopold felt a cold sweat breaking out all over him. "Richard was in your car, and halfway there, he was



attacked."

A cold chill instantly emanated from around Percival.

His car was attacked?

Were those people after Richard or him?

Vivienne furrowed her brows, asking gravely, "How is Richard?"

"Richard is seriously injured." Leopold activated the GPS, hesitating if he should take Vivienne along.

"Thomas took the hit for Richard, and he's in critical condition!"

"Has the rest of the Ellington family gone to the hospital?"

"The other members of the Ellington family have already rushed to the hospital. What about us?"

A life was at stake, let alone the fact that the injured were Richard and Thomas.

Leopold was getting anxious.

Without any hesitation, Vivienne said, "Let's go to the hospital now!"

Percival didn't want her involved, but with her medical skills, it could give his grandfather and Thomas a glimmer of hope.

"Head to the hospital." He stressed. "Hurry!"

With both Vivienne and Percival saying so, Leopold didn't dawdle. He slammed his foot on the gas pedal and drove towards the hospital in haste.

The car was basically flying. They arrived at the hospital in less than half an hour.

Vivienne and Percival rushed up the stairs and arrived at the ER. The Ellingtons were already gathered there, anxiously asking about the situation.

"Doctor, how's my father?!" Ryan and Cathy stopped the doctor, who was about to operate on Richard.

"Get the best surgeon right now! There can be no mistakes in my father's surgery!"

Heloise stood nervously with her children.

Cecilia, on the other hand, was sweating profusely.

"What exactly is the situation?! Where did the old man get injured, and why was there so much blood?!"

Cecilia was shocked when she arrived. The sight of the blood-stained floor was terrifying.

Vivienne and Percival pushed through the crowd to the front. The doctor quickly explained, "Richard is in a critical condition, and he needs surgery immediately!"

"Any further delay could cost him his life!"

The surgery had to be performed, but he had no confidence that he could successfully complete it.

Richard had hit an artery in the accident, so he was bleeding profusely. The wound was also near the heart, making it a situation that could go south easily.

Even a slight mistake could lead to a fatal outcome.

The patient on the operating table was none other than, Richard, the patriarch of the Ellington family.

There was no room for error.

Vivienne frowned as she listened to the doctor. She was ready to scrub in and operate on the old man.

"I'll do this surgery." Her voice left no room for doubt.

Ryan and Cathy were startled and immediately blocked her way angrily. "Are you out of your mind?!"

The old man is in such a critical condition, and you want to mess around?!"

Was she joking? Even if she had cured Isolde's illness before, it didn't mean she could save the old man.

His life was hanging by a thread.

Someone who could treat illnesses might not be good at surgery. Who knew if Vivienne curing Isolde's

illness was just a fluke?

Heloise also chimed in. "We must get the best surgeon for the old man's operation. You should stop causing trouble here. Can you bear the responsibility if you mess up?!"

Vivienne looked at them coldly as she radiated a menacing sense of pressure.

They couldn't save Richard, yet they were making a fuss and stopping her from operating.

If it were anyone else, she would have turned around and left. She didn't like wasting her time arguing.

But the one on the operation table was Richard, a man who treated her like his own blood and pampered her relentlessly. She had to save him.

"Vivienne." Cecilia, seeing her family making a fuss, advised her worriedly. "Surgery is not a trivial matter. If you're not confident, it's better to not get involved."

She didn't distrust Vivienne's medical skills, but Richard's condition was critical. Even if they brought in an experienced surgeon, it was uncertain if Richard could wake up.

She didn't know how skilled Vivienne was, but if she messed up this operation, Ryan and the others would never let it go.

They would hold onto this matter and demand an explanation from Vivienne. They would never let her live in peace.

She didn't want her chosen daughter-in-law to be in trouble. She had to protect her.

Percival swept a cold glance at the Ellington family, then turned to Vivienne. "Vivienne, are you confident that you can do this?" He softly asked.

"Yes." Vivienne nodded.

Percival noticed the confident look on her face. He fell silent for a moment, then said to Vivienne, "Just go ahead. I'll take the blame if anything happens."

Before coming, he had made a backup plan. If both the hospital's doctors and Vivienne were not confident, he would contact Specter Healer through the Dark Web.

In fact, he had already sent a message.

He had offered a billion dollars for Specter Healer to come out. He didn't know if Specter Healer would take the job, but it wasn't important now.

He believed in Vivienne.

Vivienne was about to enter the sterilization room when, Paul blocked Vivienne's way. "No! You can't

operate on my grandfather!"

Vivienne's eyes narrowed as a threatening aura emanated from every pore of her body.

"What makes you think you're qualified to operate on Grandpa, you little upstart? Entrusting his life to you would be nothing short of madness!"

Paul had always held disdain for Vivienne. Even after learning that she was the true heiress of the Brooks family, he still saw her as a country bumpkin.

Paul reached out to drag Vivienne away, but Percival looked up sharply. "Paul! Do you want to die?"

The murderous intent in his eyes suggested that if Paul dared to touch Vivienne, he would snap his arm in half.

Paul shuddered as he remembered the time Thomas dislocated his jaw.

Once you've experienced that bone-chilling pain, it was not something you could easily forget.

Paul was a mindless fool. He was impulsive and always the first to be targeted.

Ryan and Cathy were frustrated with him, but the most pressing matter at hand was to prevent Vivienne from performing the surgery.

Heloise also stepped forward to stop her, but Fiona, who stood behind her, had a dark look in her eyes.

She even wanted to pull her mother back to prevent her from getting involved.

Percival stepped forward to stand before Vivienne. "Go ahead, Vivienne. I'd like to see who dares to stop you!"

Paul was annoyed that he had been checked by Percival. He roared, "You're not going... Ahh!!"

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Before he could utter another word, Percival raised his hand and gripped his wrist tightly.

His action seemed effortless, but Paul winced in pain.

It felt as if his bones were about to break.

Ryan and Cathy's faces turned pale, and they began shouting furiously, "Percival! What are you doing?

Let go of your cousin, you worthless piece of trash! If you dare lay a hand on him, we won't let you off easy!"

With that, they were about to charge at Percival.

Just as Percival was about to retaliate, Vivienne tugged at his coat. "Why bother?"

Their constant interference had completely worn out her patience.

She flicked several silver needles from her hand, directly hitting their pressure points.

Ryan and the others hadn't even seen what had happened before they found themselves unable to move or speak.

Vivienne glanced at them indifferently. It was as if she were looking at insignificant insects; her eyes were devoid of any emotion.

"Give this to Thomas." Vivienne took out a life-saving pill from her pocket and handed it to Leopold, who was standing beside her. "Call Eric immediately. Thomas needs surgery now!"

Even with her miraculous medical skills, it was impossible for her to perform two surgeries at once.

The pill could sustain Thomas's life and buy enough time for Eric to arrive.

"Rest assured, Vivienne. I'll handle it right away."

With Eric's proficiency in medicine and surgical skills, they were confident that Thomas would be fine.

Having given her instructions, Vivienne turned to Percival. "I need an assistant."

"I'll arrange it." Percival immediately made a call.

Soon, several people in white lab coats arrived, led by the hospital director.

As the director was about to greet Percival, Percival gave him a look, and he quickly understood. He



then quickly turned to Vivienne. "Vivienne, we'd be glad to assist you with this operation."

Percival had already explained what he needed over the phone.

Vivienne immediately began sterilizing and then quickly led the doctors into the ER.

"I can't believe we're assisting a young girl. Has the director lost it?"

"How could they entrust such an important surgery to her? Are they trying to kill the patient?!"

Despite Vivienne's calm and skilled movements, the doctors couldn't help but feel unsure.

They were all seasoned surgeons with decades of medical study and practice.

Even with their expertise, they were still stumped by Richard's condition, so they made sure not to act rashly.

Yet Vivienne seemed unfazed. She only took half a minute to observe before picking up the scalpel.

She ignored their comments and focused entirely on the surgery.

"Stop the bleeding."

"Scalpel."

"Wipe my sweat."

Her instructions were concise, and her skilled movements gradually attracted the doctors' attention.

Even while suturing wounds around the heart, Vivienne's hands didn't tremble in the slightest. She handled the procedure swiftly and flawlessly.

The doctors grew increasingly impressed with her every move. Such surgical skills were rare even among veteran professors, yet Vivienne accomplished it with ease.

The surgery took a full three hours. When Vivienne emerged from the operating room, the Ellington family was growing impatient.

Vivienne's needles hadn't penetrated them deeply, so they were able to move again soon.

Ryan immediately questioned Vivienne as she came out, "What did you do to my dad?"

Before he could finish, the doctors who had previously complained about assisting Vivienne surrounded her and cut him off.

"Vivienne, do you have any other surgeries later? Could I observe again?"

"I'd like to assist you. Just let me watch. I promise not to disturb your surgery!"

After the surgery, Vivienne had become a revered figure among them.

Ryan and Cathy exchanged glances. They felt like they were being fooled.

Could Vivienne really be that amazing? She was just a young girl who had lived in a monastery for decades, so how could she gain the admiration of renowned doctors?

They refused to believe in Vivienne's capabilities. Moreover, Richard was still unconscious, so everything was uncertain.

"You can't leave!" Ryan attempted to stop Vivienne again and signaled for his son, Paul, to join him.

"My father hasn't woken up, so you can't just walk away!"

"Exactly! Just performing the surgery doesn't prove anything." Heloise chimed in. "He needs to wake up, then we can believe you!"

"You're just putting on a show. You can't really wake Richard up, can you?!"

"Get out of my way!" Vivienne spoke impatiently. "I don't want to repeat myself."

Her patience was wearing thin, and her expression was becoming extremely cold.

But Paul was oblivious, so he refused to move. "If my grandfather doesn't wake up, you're not going anywhere!"

Vivienne turned to Leopold, who was standing beside her. Without any expression, she said, "Someone is bullying me. Are you blind?"

Leopold was taken aback. "Who dares bully Vivienne?! They'll have to deal with us brothers!"

Did they think the disciples of the Emerald Monastery were pushovers? They didn't even check who they were dealing with!

With that, he quickly dialed a number.

Percival's eyebrows twitched. He didn't want to encounter Vivienne's disciples again, but he couldn't reveal his identity yet, so their arrival was acceptable.

He was about to have another headache.

Paul sneered at Leopold's actions. "Trying to call for backup? Let's see who you can bring. There's no one in Rivenwood with the guts to mess with the Ellingtons!"

The Ellingtons, after all, were the greatest among the Four Prominent Families of Rivenwood. Even though they had been on a downward trend in recent years, they were still a force to be reckoned with.

It was like saying a thin camel still had more fat than a horse. Anyone would give the Ellingtons a bit of respect.

Leopold didn't feel like engaging in a verbal spat, so he just stood by Vivienne's side, awaiting the

arrival of his reinforcements.

It just so happened that a few of the disciples were in Rivenwood. As soon as he mentioned that someone was bullying Vivienne, they all hopped into their cars and rushed over. Within half an hour, every single one of them had made their way to the hospital.

Eight people filled up the hospital lobby, causing quite a stir among the Ellington clan.

This was Vivienne's cavalry?

Each and every one of them was a force to be reckoned with.

Dawson swept his gaze over the crowd as a cold smirk adorned his lips. "Who was it?" He asked,

"Who was messing with my Vivienne?"

Paul shuddered under Dawson's gaze. He shrank back in fear and avoided any eye contact.

He had been the loudest earlier, and now he was acting like a dog with its tail between its legs, not daring to make a scene.

Even though he was reckless and impulsive, he recognized a few of these people. Each of them was a big shot.

"No. No one was messing with Vivienne." Seeing the wind change direction, Heloise quickly tried to

soothe the situation. "It was just a misunderstanding. A misunderstanding is all!"

She didn't know why these men were referring to Vivienne so intimately, but she knew better than to mess with them.

Especially while Richard was unconscious.

"Vivienne must be tired after her surgery." Fiona, who had been quiet the whole time, smiled and said,

"Vivienne, why don't you go home and rest? It was just a misunderstanding."

"Misunderstanding?"

Fiona may have been all smiles and politeness, but Jerry Perez, the leader of the group, was far from appeased. He stared back coldly, not mincing his words at all. "You cornered Vivienne here, and you're telling me it's a 'misunderstanding'?"

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Fiona was at a loss for words. She didn't know how to respond.

She hadn't had time to look into Vivienne's relationship with this group, so she wasn't sure what was going on.

Right now, she was certain that she didn't want to offend these people.

"Vivienne hasn't even married Percival yet, and you dare treat her like this? What will happen once she does?" Daniel looked at them coldly. "Do you think the Ellington family is untouchable?!"

"Don't get too cocky!" Ryan roared angrily. "The Ellington family doesn't need your advice on how to handle our business!"

"Is that so?" Jerry smirked. "Then, Mr. Ellington, let's see if we're qualified to teach you a thing or two!"

With that, Jerry picked up his phone and made a call.

Daniel and Eric also took out their phones and started dialing numbers.

"Immediately stop all business with the Ellington family. Cut off their cash flow."

"Cancel all collaborations with the Ellington family. Even if it's just downstream companies. All related projects must be terminated!"

"Carry out my orders. I want to see the Ellington family's stocks plummet today!"

Ryan and his crew were dumbstruck as they watched Jerry Perez and the others in action.

Individually, the Ellington family might not take these men seriously.

But if all eight of them worked together, even the Ellington family, the richest family in Rivenwood, wouldn't be able to handle it.

Before they could react, Ryan's phone started ringing.

"Mr. Ellington, we're in trouble! The Perez Group has canceled their collaboration with us, and goods are piling up."

"Our stocks have crashed. All our projects have been suspended, and our partners are saying they won't back down unless we apologize."

"Our suppliers are demanding payment. If we don't pay within an hour, they'll refuse to supply us."

Though Richard had chosen Percival as his successor, the Ellington family's business was still being managed by Ryan and his other two brothers. As for the youngest brother, he rarely came back to the city, so he was rarely involved in the company's affairs.

Now, with his other two brothers, Nathan and Henry, not present and Ryan's phone being bombarded with calls, the situation was getting out of hand.

This made Ryan's face turn deathly pale.

"Percival, these people are bullying the Ellington family." He pointed at Percival, who was watching from the sidelines and accused him of being too lenient. "Are you just going to sit back and do



nothing?!"

Even though they were all Ellingtons, Percival seemed to be siding with the outsiders.

Percival raised his eyebrows indifferently. "I'm a nobody, Ryan. Remember?"

Rumors had been circulating that Percival was a waste of space, and it seemed they were still going strong.

Had the Ellingtons forgotten?

He might not like Vivienne's friends, but he didn't mind them taking a swing at the Ellington Group.

If Ryan and the others dared to disregard Vivienne, then they shouldn't blame him for being ruthless.

As for anything to do with the Ellington family's business, he didn't care about it unless it concerned his grandfather.

"Do you realize what you're saying?!" Cathy was so angry that she began to laugh hysterically. "The Ellington family is in trouble, and instead of helping your own family, you're siding with them?! Aren't you afraid the old man will be furious when he wakes up?!"

Percival gave her a slight smirk.

Ha!

If his grandfather woke up and learned about the situation, the first thing he'd do would be to scold him for not protecting Vivienne.

Percival didn't even bother to glance at Cathy. His gaze was solely fixed on Vivienne. "Vivienne saved my grandfather's life. She's a savior to the Ellington family."

"A savior?!"

Ryan couldn't believe his ears. He turned to Vivienne, angrily shouting, "The old man hasn't woken up yet, so you're still responsible!"

"If anything happens to him, how are you going to answer to the Ellington family?!"

Vivienne raised an eyebrow. She was clearly irritated.

She looked coldly at Ryan. "Mr. Ellington, you haven't mentioned your father recovering once. Do you really hope he doesn't make it? Do you want him dead?"

Ryan's face changed color. "What nonsense are you spouting?! When have I ever wished for the old man's death?"

Although that was exactly what he was thinking.

If the old man died, according to the inheritance law, he, as Richard's eldest son, should inherit the company.

And since the old man's accident was sudden and he hadn't left a will, if he wanted to seize control of the Ellington family, the other branches couldn't even interfere.

But when Vivienne brought this up in public, it changed the whole situation.

He could already feel the hostile glares from the other members of his family.

"Hmph!" Vivienne snorted. "So, you're picking on me just because I'm an easy target?"

She gave a slight smile, and without waiting for Ryan to respond, she turned to Percival. "Mr. Wolf, what do you think?"

Percival ran his fingers through her hair, whispering, "You can do whatever you want."

Even if Jerry and his friends wanted to mess with his personal company, they wouldn't be able to do anything, even if there were twenty of them.

But when it came to the Ellington Group, just two or three of them would be enough.

He wouldn't interfere.

If the Ellington family fell, so be it.

He had never cared about being the number one family in Rivenwood.

Vivienne laughed. Even with all this chaos going on, her smile was still dazzling and attractive.

"Jerry, for Mr. Wolf's sake, just give him a little lesson." She said with a cold smile.

Jerry glanced at Percival. He clearly wasn't happy, but he had to listen to Vivienne. "I got it."

Jerry then took out his phone and dialed a number.

Ryan's phone rang again in no time.

"Big brother." Heloise was naturally timid. Upon seeing Ryan's phone ringing non-stop and realizing that it was all bad news, she couldn't help but advise him to calm down. "Let's just let it go. We can't fight her."

Vivienne's disciples might not be as strong as the Ellington family, but that didn't mean Ryan could handle them all.

Ryan frowned and retorted indignantly, "What do you mean we can't fight? Are you trying to puff up their pride?! I don't believe it! The great Ellington family can't be brought down by a bunch of stragglers!"

Jerry sneered. He had given the other party a chance, but unfortunately, Ryan didn't know the meaning of the word restraint.

The next second, countless calls flooded Ryan's phone.

"Mr. Ellington! There's only forty-five minutes left! We can't pay for the goods, so the production line has

come to a halt!"

"The losses of the Ellington Group are growing exponentially! Every minute we spend is money!"

Ryan, who was just high-spirited, was now feeling no lower than the fish at the bottom of the sea.

Reality had slapped him hard in the face.

"Impossible." He said unbelievably, "The Ellington Group is well-off, so how can we not afford to pay for the goods? You must be fooling me!"

The person in charge on the phone was almost in tears. "The funds must be signed by Percival. We can't get a penny without Percival's approval!"

Percival...

This was like a lightning strike, exploding above Ryan's head.

He looked up in shock, staring hard at the man in front of him, who was calm and composed, feeling like he was in a dream.

"You actually refused to fund the Ellington Group?!"

Damn it!

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When on earth did the old man hand over the financial reins to Percival?

He didn't even give him a heads-up!

The old man's favoritism for him was shooting through the roof!

After pouring his life into the company for so many years, he was still nothing compared to his father's grandson.

He just handed over the financial reins like it was nothing?!

"Do you want to see the Ellington Group go down the drain?!" Ryan gritted his teeth.

While standing next to Vivienne, Percival shot him a nonchalant glance. "If you want to end this farce, you must apologize to Vivienne."

He, a grown man, apologize to this little brat?!

Ryan found it utterly ridiculous. "Percival, don't push it. Just because the old man dotes on you doesn't

mean you can command me..."

But before he could finish, Vivienne raised her hand, and a silver needle struck Ryan's throat.

"Ah..." Ryan opened his mouth in shock, but nothing coherent came out.

"If you're not willing to apologize, then your mouth is of no use." Vivienne's indifferent gaze swept over him, sending chills down his spine.

She didn't care about Ryan's apology.

But for Percival's sake, she'd rather not trouble herself over something that could be resolved with an apology.

However, if the other party was ungrateful, she saw no need to show them any mercy.

"What did you do to my dad?!" After seeing his father's face contort in pain, Paul couldn't help but rush forward. He tried to grab Vivienne.

But before his hand could reach Vivienne, Percival raised his own and broke his arm.

"Ahhhh!!"

Percival was very skilled. The pain shooting through Paul's arm was a hundred times worse than a

broken jaw.

Paul felt as if millions of ants were crawling over him. The agony was almost unbearable.

"No! No!" In the blink of an eye, her husband and son were both writhing in pain on the floor. Cathy fell

to her knees in a panic. "I'll apologize! I'll apologize! Please spare them! Paul and Ryan were just

misguided. They meant no harm!"

However, no matter what Cathy said, it was as if Vivienne were staring at her like an ant, completely

ignoring her pleas.

Vivienne looked down at her. "I've never been an overly kind person."

She couldn't be bothered to waste her gaze on her any longer and turned to signal Percival to take her

home.

Percival cared about nothing but Vivienne. Naturally, he'd listen to whatever she said.

"Vivienne, Percival, let's go." Leopold escorted Vivienne and Percival out.

The remaining disciples glanced at the people in the room. "Remember to take a detour when you see

our Vivienne in the future." They spoke in unison, with voices as cold as ice.

Jerry looked at Ryan. He was kneeling on the ground and drooling uncontrollably. "Vivienne is still too



kind-hearted." Jerry said as he cracked his knuckles.

"Indeed." Daniel and Donald echoed coldly; their eyes were gleaming with anticipation. "Just sealing your throat is too light a punishment."

Eric raised his eyes, as if he were assessing something. "I'm short a few lab rats in my lab, perhaps..."

When Vivienne was operating on Richard, he had just finished operating on Thomas.

He then received a call that someone was picking on Vivienne.

He immediately rushed to her side.

Paul, whose arm was completely broken, recoiled in pain. He was trying to hide, like a scared mouse.

"What do you want?! You.."

He had no idea that Vivienne's disciples were not only from prominent families but were also highly skilled.

They had countless ways to make him suffer that would leave no trace. The only problem was whether he could bear it.

...

Vivienne got into the car and immediately fell asleep.

Percival specifically asked Leopold to drive smoothly. He held her in his arms to ensure she had a comfortable sleep.

Vivienne leaned against Percival's shoulder, looking like a rare, well-behaved kitten.

Percival gazed adoringly at the girl in his arms as he ran his fingers through her hair.

He knew that once this kitten woke up, she'd be a vengeful leopardess who no one could stop.

Just two days after the surgery, Richard had regained consciousness.

He was still very weak when he woke up, but he immediately summoned his children and grandchildren to find out what had happened.

In just a few days, Ryan and Paul looked haggard. It was as if they hadn't slept for dozens of hours.

They could barely stand on their trembling knees.

Upon learning that they had made things difficult for Vivienne and insisted that she take responsibility for the surgery, Richard was so angry that he threw his thermos at them. "You bastards! Do you want to kill me with anger?!"

Vivienne is our family's treasure. If it weren't for her personally performing the surgery, do you think I'd

still be alive?!"

The thermos hit Ryan in the face, causing his right cheek to swell instantly. "Dad, I..."

Cathy quickly stepped forward to defend him. "Dad, you don't know that Percival, to support his

fiancée, even helped outsiders put pressure on our family. At the critical moment when the Ellington

Group needed funds, he refused to sign off on them!

Now there's a lot of criticism out there, and our partners are having second thoughts about

collaborating on future projects with us!"

She thought Richard would reprimand Percival, but instead, he applauded. "That's my good grandson!

If he can't even protect his own fiancée, what right does he have to be a part of the Ellington family?!"

Ryan's family was dumbfounded. What kind of magic potion had Vivienne given Richard? Or had she

done something during the surgery?

How could everything she said or did win Richard's favor?

As they were talking, Percival walked into the ward with Vivienne.

Richard looked a bit under the weather, but he still seemed spirited.

"Grandpa, if you hadn't woken up, Auntie Cathy would've had my head on a platter." Percival calmly said.

Ryan and Cathy were fuming. They were practically choking on their own rage. Just who was going to have whose head on a platter?

Vivienne's disciples were nothing short of devils. They tormented Paul and Ryan to within an inch of their lives, and here was Percival playing the victim.

"I'd like to see who'd dare!" Richard's expression turned frosty as he looked at his idiotic family, but he then turned and beckoned Vivienne to his side.

"Vivienne, I owe you my life." He said with a smile.

"I'm not sure what I can offer you as an old man, but for the insolence of my son and grandson, I must administer a punishment to them myself!"

Saying this, he signaled Ryan and Paul to step forward. "Both of you, kneel down! Apologize sincerely to Vivienne! If Vivienne doesn't forgive you, I won't let you off either!"

No matter how stubborn these two were, after being disciplined by Vivienne and Percival and being thrashed by Vivienne's disciples, they could only bow their heads in front of Richard.

"Vivienne, I'm sincerely sorry." Paul pounded his head against the ground, fearing his apology might not be loud enough to appease Vivienne. "You're a bigger person than me. Please let bygones be bygones. I beg for your mercy!"

Ryan also knelt down, defeated. His voice was raspy, like a rusty bell. "I was blind not to see your worth, Vivienne. Please don't hold a grudge against us. If it'll cool your anger, Paul and I are ready to do anything."

"Are you sure you're willing to do anything?"

Vivienne raised an eyebrow slightly as a playful tone emerged from her lips.

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Ryan shuddered. He almost collapsed, but he still managed to respond, "Whatever Vivienne wishes."

"Good." Vivienne tapped her slender finger on her chin. "Then I'd like Mr. Ellington to resign from his executive position and work as a security guard at the Ellington Group."

"What did you say?!" Ryan's eyes widened in disbelief. He was no longer able to form coherent sentences.

Cathy screamed, "Dad, Ryan is an executive of the Ellington Group! Making him a security guard is like

slapping your own face!"

Even if he were just a nominal executive with no real power, he was still a well-known figure at the Ellington Group.

"Dad, how could I work as a security guard?" Ryan couldn't accept this reality.

"Do as Vivienne says." Richard, even after witnessing his son's breakdown, showed no sympathy. "You really need to learn a lesson."

Ryan had caused Richard enough trouble with his entitlement as the eldest son of the Ellington family.

Richard had turned a blind eye to it all, but not anymore.

With Thomas still recuperating, Percival ordered another assistant to handle the matter.

In less than half an hour, Ryan had gone from being the powerful first son of the Ellington family to a mere security guard at the Ellington Group. Supported by his son, he left the room.

Richard patted Vivienne's hand, expressing his regret. "I am sorry for the troubles you've faced.

Whoever needs to be dealt with, I will do it. You can stay with the Brooks family or the Ellington family, whichever you prefer. I'll support your decision."

"Thank you, Grandfather."

With Richard's clear stance, Vivienne understood that both Richard and Cecilia treated her with the utmost care and affection.

"Grandfather, Vivienne and I have other matters to attend to." Percival interjected. "We will visit you another day."

Richard looked at Vivienne with fondness so evident that he seemed ready to send Percival away so he could keep her here. But he restrained himself. "Alright, but you better take good care of Vivienne. If anything happens to Vivienne, you'll be the first one I'll hold responsible!"

Percival fell silent.

He wondered who was the true grandchild in Richard's heart. It seemed to be leaning heavily towards Vivienne.

As they left the hospital and got in the car, the smile on Vivienne's face faded.

"How is Thomas?"

Thomas was no ordinary assistant. He had worked closely with Percival for years.

"Don't worry." Percival understood her concern. "He's out of critical condition and is recuperating."

Eric, one of Vivienne's disciples, although not as skilled as her, was more than capable of saving Thomas.

"That's good."

Vivienne nodded as a menacing glint crossed her eyes. "I won't let any of the people who did this escape."

An hour later, the car stopped in front of a villa in the suburbs.

Vivienne walked in as if she were entering her own home, heading straight to the basement.

Percival appeared to understand what she was going to do and didn't question her. He simply followed her to the basement.

Matthew was waiting for them in the well-lit basement.

In a corner, a man was hanging by iron chains, looking weak and on the verge of death.

"Has he confessed?"

Matthew shook his head. "He's tough. Despite the torture, he hasn't said a word."

Upon hearing the voices, the man strained to lift his head. Upon seeing Vivienne and Percival, a grin spread across his face. "Mr. Ellington, Vivienne, nice to see you."



The man had remained silent under Matthew's harsh interrogation but spoke up upon seeing Vivienne and Percival. This was unexpected.

"Do you know us?" Vivienne and Percival raised their eyebrows simultaneously.

"The heiress of the Brooks family and the seventh grandchild of the Ellington family." The man coughed violently, spitting out a mouthful of blood. "Who wouldn't recognize you?"

After Richard was attacked, Vivienne and Percival immediately launched an investigation.

They both believed that the person who attempted to kill Richard had another target in mind.

If it weren't for Richard coincidentally taking Percival's car that day, Percival would likely be the one in the hospital now.

"Who ordered you to do this?" Vivienne asked, not giving the man a chance to rest. "Who is your target?"

"Vivienne, you're a smart woman." The man tilted his head as he portrayed a twisted smile. "You can guess what we want to do, can't you?"

Vivienne had no patience for his stupid games. If it weren't for Percival's involvement, she wouldn't

bother asking.

"I'm not interested in playing games with you." She picked up a whip from the table and stared at him

with cold, merciless eyes. "Don't test my patience."

As she spoke, she lashed out with the whip, hitting the man in his most vulnerable spot.

The whip was barbed and coated with poison, causing unbearable pain and severe itching.

"Ahh!"

The man screamed in agony.

If it were just a whip, he could endure the pain. But a poisoned whip was excruciating.

"Vivienne." Matthew rose to take the whip from Vivienne. "Let me handle this. Don't hurt your hands."

Having spent so much time with Vivienne, he knew her well. She was a woman who abhorred

complications.

She always used the simplest approach to interrogate her enemies.

For Vivienne to personally wield a whip today, she must have really been pushed to the brink.

Matthew glanced at Percival and let out a sigh.

Vivienne had fallen head over heels for this man.

He wondered what the eight disciples would think. As for Leopold, he was already in Percival's pocket.

Matthew picked up the whip. Each lash was more ruthless than the last.

The man's skin had begun to peel back. It wasn't until raw flesh was seen that he finally stopped.

"Ready to talk now?" Vivienne, with her arms crossed, sat calmly on the side. "I don't mind waiting you out."

The man, in his disheveled state, lifted his head. His vision was starting to blur.

"Mr. Ellington." His voice was weak as he muttered, "Our target is you..."

As expected, their target wasn't Richard but the owner of the car, Percival.

Vivienne and Percival's eyes narrowed. They began pressing him further. "Who ordered you to do this?"

A cold smirk flashed across the man's lips as he suddenly bit down on something.

"He's poisoned!"

Vivienne instantly sensed the danger and grabbed his neck, but it was already too late.

The man had bitten into a capsule hidden in his mouth, swallowing the poison whole.

"You'll never know... who ordered... to kill..."

He laughed wildly as his head slumped to the side and his breath slowly came to a stop.

Vivienne's slender fingers gripped his throat tightly as her body radiated a chilling aura. "You want to

die? It won't be that easy!"

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She pried open his mouth, revealing a mouthful of teeth stained with a deadly poison.

When Matthew caught the man, the first thing he did was remove all traces of poison from his mouth,

preventing any chance of him committing suicide.

But he hadn't expected the man to be so thoroughly prepared. The man had left himself no room for

survival when he realized that he had no chance to escape.

Vivienne fed him a life-saving pill and pulled out a silver needle to seal his key pressure points.

"Matthew, keep an eye on him while I research the antidote." She said coldly.

The poison he'd ingested was extremely potent. It was nearly as potent as her own concoction, shadow

venom. She could neutralize it, but she needed a few specific herbs. And herbs were exactly what she

lacked at the moment.

The man had stopped breathing momentarily, but since Vivienne had already fed him a life-saving pill

and sealed his heart meridian with a silver needle, it wouldn't be that easy for him to die. Extracting information from him, however, would take some time.

Vivienne's expression darkened as she thought about this.

"It's alright." Percival wrapped his arm around her shoulder, trying to comfort her. "At least now we know that I'm their target."

"These people are going too far." Vivienne's gloom had not faded in the slightest.

"Are you worried about me?" Percival asked. He chuckled after noticing how angry she really was. "I never thought you would be the one to protect me."

"You're my fiancé." Vivienne grabbed his collar and pulled him close.

Upon seeing her serious expression, Percival couldn't help but smile and pull her closer into his arms.

"You're right, Vivienne," he said, "but I can't always be just your fiancé, can I? When can I become your husband?"

He'd already half-tricked and half-begged Dorian into agreeing. As long as Vivienne agreed to marry him, he could register their marriage as soon as the date arrived.

"We'll see." Vivienne didn't intend to give in just yet. She played with the silver needle hidden up her sleeve. "If I'm not satisfied with you, a single needle can solve the problem."

Percival whispered in her ear, "Vivienne, are you planning to murder your husband?"

Matthew watched from the side, suddenly understanding how Leopold must feel when he's around them. These two could be so sweet and indulgent to each other that they completely ignored the presence of others.

"Vivienne." He coughed lightly, reminding them of his presence. "Do we need to continue investigating this matter?"

Vivienne snapped back to reality and pushed Percival away. "Yes."

Since the attackers had made their move, they wouldn't stop until they reached their goal. They needed to act first and clear out any unnecessary obstacles.

"I'll have other disciples assist you." Vivienne took out her phone and quickly typed out a few messages. "This villa will be your temporary base. Without my orders, don't act rashly."

Matthew nodded. "Understood."

"What about the Ellington family?" Vivienne asked, looking at Percival.

There was a cold smile on Percival's face. "It seems like someone's getting impatient."

Just as he was "recovering," someone made a move on him. They underestimated him.

"I'll have someone keep an eye on the Ellington family." Percival's eyes were deep and unreadable as he said this.

Vivienne looked at him. "Do you already have an answer in your mind?"

Percival didn't answer immediately, only saying, "I still need evidence."

He never fought a battle he wasn't sure he could win. Now that they attacked him, they would have to pay severely for their actions.

After leaving the man in the basement for Matthew to deal with, Percival took Vivienne back to the Brooks Mansion.

It was already eleven o'clock at night when she got home. Most people were already asleep, so the mansion was quiet.

"Miss, the master asked you to visit his study." A servant told her.

Vivienne didn't expect Scott to be awake at this hour, but she still went to his study as requested.

The Brooks family knew about Richard's situation, so naturally, Scott had to ask about it. "How was the surgery? Has the old man woken up?"

"Yes."

Vivienne's indifferent demeanor still hadn't changed. It was as if she didn't care about Scott being her father at all.

Scott's face fell slightly, and a hint of bitterness appeared in his expression.

Vivienne had been home for a while, and they'd even held a reunion banquet for her, but, even now, he still felt distant from his daughter. No matter what he did, he couldn't seem to get close to her.

"You're much like your mother. She never needed me to worry about anything too." He couldn't help but

sigh. "If only she were still here."

The moment Vivienne heard him mention her mother, her eyes tightened, and her face darkened.

She stood up, not sparing him another glance. "I'm tired."

"Alright." Scott said helplessly. "Get some rest. We can talk about this tomorrow."

Vivienne scanned the room silently before returning to her own room.



After locking the door, she took out a miniature detector from her pocket, looking at the display with a raised eyebrow.

The detector showed that there were at least four surveillance devices in Scott's study, which covered all directions.

Vivienne clenched the detector in her hand as deep and thoughtful emotions began to well up in her heart.

At two-thirty in the morning, everyone in the Brooks Mansion was asleep. The mansion was so quiet, you could hear a pin drop.

Vivienne slowly opened her eyes, got out of bed, and pulled out a small laptop hidden under her bed.

With a few clicks, she easily disabled the surveillance in Scott's study.

The whole process took less than five minutes. Afterward, she quietly left her room and went to Scott's study, but it was locked.

Vivienne picked the lock and slipped inside, starting her search from the left side of the room to right.

The room didn't seem to have any hidden doors, but there was a photo of her mother on the desk.

Vivienne slowly walked over to the desk as her hand hovered over the photo, and her eyes filled with a

deep longing and anger.

The beauty of her mother, forever captured in photographs, could never be erased by sorrow or pain.

She was no longer there, so what was the point of pretending to be sentimental with a mere picture?

As her fingers traced the frame, she suddenly discovered a hidden compartment in the desk.

Vivienne scrunched her eyebrows and opened the compartment to find a peculiar safe.

This safe was fireproof, waterproof, and particularly secure. She knew how to crack it open, but she would need the right tools.

After examining the safe, Vivienne decided to leave it for now. She planned to return later with the right tools.

Before leaving the study, she wiped away all traces of her presence, restoring everything she had touched to its original state.

After securing the room, Vivienne turned to head back to her bedroom. As she stepped into the hallway, however, she heard a faint rustling sound.

Someone was there.

Just as Vivienne was about to slip into the shadows, she heard a suppressed gasp.

"You scared me!"

Upon seeing that it was Vivienne, the late-night intruder, Kala Brooks, heaved a huge sigh of relief.

"Thank God it's not my parents, or I'd be in deep trouble!" She loudly whispered.

"Hey, what are you doing here?" Kala had snuck out for a night on the town and was just returning

home. She wasn't expecting to run into Vivienne.

"I'm thirsty." Vivienne answered calmly, smoothly changing the subject. "I'm heading to the kitchen for a

glass of water."

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Vivienne remembered that she was Timothy's daughter, a popular and talented actress.

Despite never having met in person, the video call they'd had where Kala seemed indifferent to the

Peach Blossom bracelet, which Judith gifted to Vivienne, was enough to prove to Vivienne that Kala

was not interested in fame or fortune. She was a straightforward and forthright person.

Vivienne raised an eyebrow at her. "What about you?"

"I don't even want to think about it! I finally had some time to come home, but my parents won't let me

leave the house. They insist that I stay and spend time with them." Kala shared, somewhat helplessly.

"So, I sneak out while they're asleep. I want to have some fun! You mustn't tell my parents that I went out! They've been keeping a tight rein on me lately. I feel like they'd get a watchdog to keep an eye on me if they could. I haven't had a chance to relax in ages."

"Sure." Vivienne agreed with a light laugh.

Vivienne seemed like an agreeable person, which made Kala feel at ease with her.

"By the way." She promptly pulled Vivienne into her room and rummaged through her stuff to find a box. "I missed the family dinner last time and felt bad about not giving you a gift. I'd like you to have this."

"What is it?"

Vivienne was a little puzzled. She wanted to open it, but Kala stopped her.

"Don't worry; it's something good." Kala winked at her with a mischievous grin on her face. "Take your time and look at it in your room."

Vivienne didn't quite know what to make of Kala's mysterious behavior, but she trusted that Kala meant no harm. So, clutching the box, she returned to her own room.

Back in her room, she took a sip of water from the glass on her desk, and as she opened Kala's gift, her mind wandered back to her earlier visit to Scott's study.

When she saw what was in the box, she choked on her water and sprayed it all over her bed.

This...

Kala had actually gifted her a stack of male pin-up photos, thoughtfully including their contact information.

This size...

"Wow!" Vivienne clicked her tongue twice as she leisurely flipped through the photos.

She had to admit that these men had great bodies.

They had defined abs and muscular physiques.

If she were to touch them, they'd probably feel pretty good.

But if her dear Mr. Wolf found out about this, he'd probably burn the entire box of photos right away.

At the same time, Percival, who was looking after Richard in the hospital, sneezed and felt his ears ringing as they turned slightly red.

Who was talking about him?

He glanced at the old man sleeping peacefully on the bed and suddenly thought of Vivienne.

Just as Percival was about to call Vivienne, his phone rang. He glanced at the call, and his smile instantly faded.

These people were more impatient than he had imagined.

With his brows furrowed and his expression cold, Percival answered the phone.

"Did you figure it out?" His voice was monotonous and devoid of any warmth.

"Percival! We did figure it out. Fiona wasn't the one who did this!"

Percival frowned. "It wasn't her?"

"Yes!" The man on the other end of the line answered, "Fiona did send someone to kill you, but before she could take action, someone else beat her to it."

Percival's eyes narrowed slightly, and after a moment of silence, he asked, "Have you found out who it was?"

"Not yet. The culprit is hiding very well. Our people had just found a clue when it was instantly erased."

"Keep looking!" With his face still devoid of any expression, Percival commanded him in a stern voice.

It seemed that his return had really stirred up quite a few people.

Somebody beat Fiona to the punch.

"Yes, sir!" The man on the phone hesitated before adding, "Also, Fiona recently sought out the Frostfire

Intelligence Agency. She placed an order for boar poison."

Percival's eyes narrowed. "Understood."

...

The next day.

Vivienne was awakened by a video call from Percival.

She lazily answered the call as she yawned. "What's up?"

Percival couldn't help but smile at the sight of her. He looked as happy and content as a well-fed kitten.

"Haven't had breakfast yet? I'll have my assistant..."

Before he could finish his sentence, he noticed something on Vivienne's bedside table. His eyes

maliciously narrowed, and his tone suddenly became dangerous. "Vivienne, what are you looking at

behind my back?"

With his good vision, he clearly saw the pin-up photos of naked men on Vivienne's bedside table.

So, when he was away, she was sneaking peeks at other men?!

Vivienne could sense his jealousy even through the screen and nonchalantly replied, "I'm just quenching my thirst, Mr. Wolf. You're not up for it, so why should I stay thirsty?"

Percival was speechless.

Quenching her thirst by looking at naked men?

He was not up for it?

Just as Percival was about to speak, he suddenly heard a young man's voice from Vivienne's end of the line.

"Vivienne!"

"Aaron!" Vivienne was momentarily stunned and walked out onto her balcony. Only then did she see

Aaron waving at her from below.

"I brought you breakfast!"

Upon seeing Vivienne appear on the balcony, Aaron's smile widened, and he waved even more enthusiastically.



"How did he get there?" Percival's jealousy was bubbling to the surface, and he was now struggling to keep it in check.

"I'm not sure." Vivienne propped her chin on her hand as she watched the exuberant young man in the courtyard, then she said to Percival, "I'll see you at the hospital."

Although Richard had woken up, he needed to rest and recover. As the lead surgeon, she was most familiar with his condition. Being there would also save her a lot of trouble.

Upon hearing that she was coming to the hospital, all of Percival's anger and jealousy dissipated.

"Good, I'll be waiting for you." Percival's lips curled up in a smile.

Having changed her clothes, Vivienne came downstairs to find Aaron sitting in the living room.

Baron and Scott were chatting with him. Upon seeing Vivienne, Baron chuckled. "When did you and Aaron become so close? The boy's been here since early morning just to see you."

Aaron had only recently been brought back, and while the Brooks family knew of his existence, they hadn't seen much of him.

"Vivienne and I hit it off." Aaron replied, not bothered by the others' stares. "We clicked instantly at the reunion banquet and had a great chat."

The Brooks family and the Miller tribe always had a peculiar bond. Aaron, being the illegitimate child in the Miller family, was inevitably seen with skepticism by Baron and Scott.

But each of them had battled their way through the ruthless business world, so they had learned to keep their emotions in check. Their faces were like masks, never revealing their true feelings.

Aaron never mentioned their prior acquaintance, and Vivienne wasn't about to bring it up either.

The less the Brooks family knew about her past, the better. Vivienne had no desire to stir up trouble.

"I'm heading to the hospital later to see Richard." Vivienne casually mentioned as she munched on the breakfast Aaron had brought her.

"Perfect timing." Baron nodded. "We were planning on going to the hospital too. After all, we can't ignore such a major incident involving that old man."

Aaron had just arrived, but Vivienne was about to leave. Naturally, he didn't want to miss out. "The

Miller family also cares about Richard's condition. Allow me to go on their behalf."

By the time they all arrived at the hospital, the place was buzzing with activity.

The Ellington family were all present, cramming the private luxury room to the brim.

"Richard." Vivienne made her way through the crowd to the old man's side. "How are you feeling today?"

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From the moment Richard saw her, a wide grin spread across his face. Any discomfort he'd felt seemed to evaporate instantly. "Seeing you, my dear girl, seems to chase away all my aches and pain.

My dear girl, you just performed a procedure on me yesterday, and here you are checking in on me again. Your thoughtfulness and kindness are unmatched. I'm truly blessed to have you as my granddaughter-in-law."

The old man couldn't help but sing Vivienne's praises, making Ryan, who was standing off to the side, visibly uncomfortable. Yet he kept his mouth shut.

Thanks to Vivienne, he was now stuck working as a security guard at the Ellington Group, a job he found as enjoyable as a root canal.

"Isn't that the truth?" Cecilia chuckled as she took Vivienne's hand with a sense of pride that bordered on boastful. "Percival truly hit the jackpot with you. I have no idea where his good luck comes from."

Percival, who had been lingering in the crowd, cast his eyes toward Aaron, who was trailing behind Vivienne like a lost puppy.

Ever since the reunion banquet, Aaron had been practically glued to Vivienne's side. How could he let a man follow his fiancée from the Brooks Mansion to the hospital?!

"Vivienne." Percival called out as he strode toward her. With a dramatic sigh, he pulled her into his embrace. "I'm so tired."

With a sly smile, Vivienne replied, "I'll feed you something later as a reward."

Percival's fatigue seemed to instantly evaporate.

"Enough!" Baron interjected, casting a scowl at Percival. "This isn't the place for public displays of affection. Vivienne hasn't even officially become your wife yet!"

Despite having recently undergone surgery, Richard was still full of energy. He quickly jumped to their defense. "Baron, what are you implying?! Are you trying to upset me?! Vivienne is already a part of our family. That's a fact that no one can change. If you insist on objecting, I'm ready to fight you on this!"

Richard looked as though he were about to leap out of bed, so Cecilia quickly reached out to calm him.

"Dad, you need to take it easy. You're still recovering from your surgery."

Richard didn't look like someone who had just been operated on. He was livelier than men half his age.

"Grandpa." Vivienne soothed him in an attempt to steer the conversation back on track. "We've apprehended the person who attacked you. He ingested poison, but I've given him an antidote. He should regain consciousness soon."

Percival lifted his gaze, adding, "Once he's awake, we'll know who ordered the attack."

While Percival didn't explicitly say that he was actually the target, Richard had already pieced together the clues.

"No! They weren't trying to kill me! They were after you!" Richard's eyes swept over the gathered crowd. "I was just unfortunate enough to be in your car."

Richard turned his gaze to Vivienne. "The person who wanted to harm Percival... it was someone from the Ellington family, wasn't it?"

Although they had not yet determined who was responsible, all signs pointed to someone from the Ellington family as the likely culprit.

Vivienne nodded. "Possibly."

The room fell silent. Fiona, standing in the crowd, looked away to hide her panic.

"Vivienne! What are you implying?" Cathy snapped and crossed her arms in agitation. "Are you

suggesting someone among us wanted to harm Richard?"

It was clear that Cathy's anger was not solely directed at Vivienne but also at Percival, who had supported her.

"No one wanted anything bad to happen to Percival. We might not have been waiting on him hand and foot when he was in his wheelchair, but we all hoped he would recover soon. Don't you dare stir up trouble and pit us against each other!"

Scott frowned at Cathy's harsh demeanor. "Vivienne was only stating that they've caught the person responsible for Richard's attack. She didn't say that you were the mastermind. There's no need for you to get so worked up."

Cathy, realizing his implications, angrily turned away.

Vivienne observed the exchange, taking note of everyone's reactions.

"Alright." Richard waved his hand dismissively and lay back down. "Leave the interrogation to Vivienne and Percival. The rest of you don't need to stress over this. I trust Vivienne and Percival to bring me satisfactory answers. I'm tired and want some rest now. You all should go home."

He paused, grabbing Vivienne's hand before anyone could move. "Vivienne, stay with me. I could use some company."

Richard's favoritism was clear as day, and it visibly irked the other members of the Ellington family. But there was nothing they could do about it.

As everyone reluctantly left the room, Vivienne stepped out into the hallway to answer a phone call.

"How are things going?"

Matthew, on the other end of the call, shook his head in frustration. "Nothing. They're fearless. Each one of them ingests poison the moment they're caught, leaving no leads behind."

"Keep looking." Vivienne ordered, her voice ice-cold. "Don't overlook any detail."

"Yes, ma'am." Matthew responded.

"And the one in the basement?" Vivienne asked.

"His vital signs are stable." Matthew replied.

After ingesting Vivienne's life-saving pill, the man's condition improved, though he remained unconscious.

"Good. Keep me updated." Vivienne ended the call, but her expression remained unreadable.

...

In the hospital's pharmacology department, Calista was chatting with a doctor she knew. She had originally come to the hospital on other business, but upon hearing about Richard's situation, she decided to pay him a visit with a fruit basket in hand.

"You wouldn't believe the surgeon who operated on Richard. I've been in the medical field for over two decades, and I've never seen someone sew up an incision so flawlessly!"

"Her hands were incredibly steady. She made incisions right next to the heart! It was absolutely breathtaking! There are few who could pull off such a surgery!"

Calista, overhearing their excited discussion about Richard's surgery, couldn't help but feel intrigued.

"Who is this surgeon you're talking about? Do I know her?"

The crowd all shook their heads. "She isn't on the staff at our hospital. It seems like she was specially brought in from somewhere else."

"Her capabilities are extraordinary. She is definitely better than you, Calista. It's a shame you missed that surgery; it would have been a great opportunity to learn."



Calista could tolerate many things, but she couldn't accept someone saying her surgical skills were inadequate.

She was second to none in her medical proficiency. No one could surpass her, especially considering her prestigious lineage.

Making an excuse, Calista stood up and took her fruit basket, heading towards Richard's hospital room.

She bumped into Percival right at the doorway, and a smile quickly spread across her face. "Mr.

Ellington, so you're here too."

Afraid that he might not remember her, Calista added, "I'm Calista, the head of the TIC Research Institute."

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Percival gave her a rather aloof grunt. "What is it?"

"I heard Richard had a car accident." Seeing that the man in front of her paid absolutely no attention to

her, Calista clenched her fingers and squeezed out a smile. "The surgery was very successful. I

wonder who the surgeon was. Could you introduce me?"

"No!" Percival coldly glanced at the woman in front of him, not mincing his words in his response.

Calista was taken aback, and her smile froze on her face. "I came based on her reputation, Mr.

Ellington. You don't need to be so sensitive."

"And?" Percival's attitude did not soften at all, but rather became more indifferent.

"I..." Calista wanted to say something else, but Percival didn't give her another glance. He quickly turned around to leave.

Just as Percival left, Paul, who had been feeling a bit restless in the hospital room, came out.

He saw Calista and was slightly surprised. "Calista, what brings you here?"

Calista snapped out of her depressed daze. She smiled and said, "I came to check on Richard."

"Oh." Paul was now very sensitive to the name Richard and didn't feel like continuing the conversation,

so he said, "Then go in. My grandfather is in the room."

With that, Paul turned to leave.

"Wait!" Calista suddenly called out to him.

Paul stopped in his tracks. "Is there something else?"

"I heard that the doctor who treated your grandfather is very good. Can you tell me who she is?" Calista asked.

At the mention of this, Paul's anger flared up. "Good? She's nothing more than a blind cat! What kind of medical skills does Vivienne, that country bumpkin, have? Mentioning her is bad luck!" Paul didn't want to talk to Calista anymore and turned to leave.

Calista stood in disbelief. She could hardly believe her ears.

Vivienne?

The one who performed the surgery on Richard was Vivienne?

How could this be?

Even if she knew enough medical skills to fool people, there was a huge gap between performing surgery and regular checkups.

But according to the hospital staff, Vivienne's medical skills were really exceptional.

No!

She didn't believe it!

This must be people over-glorifying Vivienne again!

Calista clenched her teeth and pushed the door into the room open, only to see Ryan and Cathy, who hadn't left.

Richard was lying in bed, already fast asleep.

"Dr. Pendleton."

The Ellington and Pendleton families didn't cross paths much, but Cathy had heard about Calista from friends.

Since she was from a prominent medical family, Calista's reputation was quite well-known.

"Hello." Calista politely greeted her. "I heard about Richard, so I came to check on him."

"It's good that you came; I was worried about what to do." Cathy quickly walked up to her, clutching her like her last lifeline. "Ever since the surgery, the old man has lost his appetite and has become quite sleepy. Could it be that Vivienne made a mistake during the surgery?! Dr. Pendleton, please help us!"

Calista was still reeling from the blow of being overshadowed by Vivienne. Hearing this, rather than worrying about the old man's health, she felt a bit relieved.

That Vivienne couldn't possibly have the ability to perform surgery. It seemed she was just a looker with no real talent.

If Richard was having these symptoms right after the surgery, there must have been a mishap during

the procedure.

She pretended to give Richard a serious examination, then raised her head and asked seriously, "You said Vivienne performed the surgery? Does she even have a medical license? How dare she perform surgery?!"

Cathy was taken aback by her question and turned to look at Ryan.

"Yeah! Vivienne doesn't even have a medical license! How could she operate on the old man?!"

Ryan, who had been silent the whole time, slapped his thigh in regret. "That little wretch fooled us all!

She's not a doctor at all! How could she have the gall to step into the operating room?! Is she disregarding the old man's life?!"

"Surgery is a very serious matter. Any slight negligence can lead to fatal problems." Calista added fuel to the fire. "Vivienne was far too reckless."

Just as she finished speaking, Vivienne walked into the room after dealing with some matters.

Upon seeing Ryan and Cathy still there, plus an extra Calista in the room, Vivienne furrowed her brows slightly.

"Grandfather mentioned that he wanted to rest." She crossed her arms and coldly watched the couple,

not even glancing at Calista.

"You can cut the act!" After hearing what Calista had said, Cathy straightened up. "Dr. Pendleton said you don't even have a medical license! You had no right to operate on the old man! You could go to jail for this!"

"I think you have ulterior motives." Ryan, who originally kept quiet, now angrily pointed at Vivienne.

"You want to harm the old man, don't you?!"

Vivienne shot him a glance, and Ryan quickly withdrew his finger.

His memories of being choked by her disciples were still fresh in his mind, and he didn't know why he felt such fear. He completely lost all courage in front of Vivienne.

"I don't have a license?" Vivienne sneered at Calista as she crossed her arms. "It seems like you know me very well."

Calista felt a surge of anxiety well up within her. She indeed had not checked and just casually mentioned that Vivienne lacked a license, but the old man's loss of appetite and constant sleepiness were facts that Cathy herself had conveyed.

"Can you deny that there were no issues with your surgery?!" She pointed at Richard on the bed as her tone grew heavier. "Richard is still unconscious. Isn't that proof enough?!"

Vivienne laughed, as if she had heard a joke.

"What's so funny about saving lives? Are you treating human lives like they're nothing?" Calista said with indignation.

Damn that Vivienne!

She dared to mock her?!

"Enough!"

Before Vivienne could respond, Richard, lying on the bed, suddenly opened his eyes. "Nonsense! Who is doubting Vivienne's medical skills?!"

Calista was taken aback.

Hadn't Cathy said that the old man had been sleeping so deeply that he couldn't be awakened? But now he was not only awake, but he also seemed more vigorous than ever.

"Richard..." She put aside her surprise and composed herself. "Are you alright?"

"Should there be something wrong with me?" Richard retorted. "You all are making my head ache with

your incessant bickering. I was merely pretending to sleep to avoid the hassle, yet I heard you all criticizing Vivienne!"

He cast an unsatisfied glance at Calista. "Some people, despite being renowned doctors from prestigious families, can't even tell the difference between a patient pretending to sleep and being unconscious!" He said, mocking her so-called skills.

Calista's face flushed and then paled under Richard's sarcastic reprimand. How could she have known that Vivienne actually had the skills to restore Richard to his usual state?