

Million-Dollar 321

Chapter 321

Ryan's face suddenly fell. He might have thought his son was a good-for-nothing, but that didn't give

anyone else the right to criticize him, especially an outsider like Vivienne.

He said, "Dad, I've always respected your wishes, but today Vivienne has crossed a line! Shouldn't you make a stand?"

"Yeah!" Cathy chimed in defiantly. "She's been targeting us this entire time. I don't know if it's because she's jealous or if someone's been pulling her strings!"

Pulling her strings?

That was a clear jab at Percival.

Vivienne was the daughter-in-law of Richard's third son, namely Percival's father, so naturally, she would side with Percival.

Her current feud with Paul was clearly a fallout between Richard's third son and first son.

"Enough!" Richard was so angry that his voice was shaking. He was still recovering from his illness and didn't have the strength to physically intervene. "Ryan, don't think I don't know about your targeting of Percival and Vivienne! The last time I assigned you as a security guard, it was to teach you a lesson!"

Richard shook his head in disappointment. "And what did you learn? Nothing! You're even dragging your own son into your schemes against Vivienne!"

"Dad, Ryan didn't mean any harm! He just wants what's best for the Ellington family!" Cathy tried to defend her husband, but the old man was done listening.

"I might be old, but I'm not blind or deaf. I've turned a blind eye to your past actions, but now that you've dared to scheme against Vivienne, don't blame me for being ruthless!"

Richard spoke, then turned to his butler. "From today on, Ryan's family is not allowed to stay in the mansion. Without my permission, they are not allowed to return. This is your responsibility, so make sure it's done!"

Ryan, Cathy, and Paul were all stunned.

What?

They weren't allowed to return to the mansion?!

Wasn't this an indirect way of saying that he had lost Richard's favor and was no longer considered one of the heirs of the Ellington family?

"Dad, I was just confused for a moment. Don't hold it against me." Ryan quickly apologized; seeing that the old man remained unmoved, he desperately grabbed Paul and scolded him, "Aren't you going to apologize to your grandfather?!"

"Why should I apologize?! It's Grandpa who's being biased!" Paul stubbornly refused to admit his mistake.

Ryan was so angry that he was about to spit blood. He raised his hand and harshly slapped him several times, pushing him to kneel on the ground.

Paul was dizzy from the blows. He struggled to remain kneeling as his body constantly swayed.

"Why are you hitting him?!" Cathy was heartbroken, but she didn't dare argue in front of Richard. She whispered, "Paul didn't say anything wrong."

Ryan ignored her and swallowed his humiliation. He pulled his son to apologize to the old man. "Dad, we're all family. There's nothing we can't get past. It was all Paul's misunderstanding. It has nothing to do with Vivienne. We won't hold it against Vivienne, so please calm down."

Richard laughed in anger. "You won't hold it against her? You've caused such a disgrace! You've caused chaos in the family, and you have the audacity to say you won't hold it against her?"

He pointed at Paul, coughing and cursing. "You say I'm biased towards Vivienne; well, let me tell you, I

am! Having a child like Vivienne marry into the Ellington family is a blessing. It's an honor for us. If

anyone dares to make trouble for Vivienne in the future, they'd better get out of the Ellington family!"

Ryan knelt on the ground, unable to believe that Richard would truly favor an outsider over him, his

eldest son.

Paul, his face swollen and his brain fuzzy from the beating, was even more unable to swallow this bitter

pill.

He had been beaten and scolded, but the old man still refused to forgive them. He showed no sign of

changing his mind.

"It's all your fault! You damn bitch!" Enraged, he stood up and charged at Vivienne.

He wanted to throttle her and give her a taste of her own medicine.

However, Paul barely got close to Vivienne when Percival kicked him hard in the groin.

"Ah!" Paul screamed in pain while clutching his crotch as he fell to his knees.

The kick was so brutal that he felt like he had been crippled.

Percival looked down at him coldly, as if he were a mere insect. "This is what you get if you try to lay a hand on my Vivienne."

"Paul!" Cathy was frightened out of her wits. It took her a moment to rush over and check on her son.

Paul was so pale and sweaty from the pain that he couldn't even answer her. He just opened his mouth in a silent scream.

"That's enough." Richard glanced at him with a grave expression on his face. "Take him to the hospital first. If you dare to plot behind my back again and do such disgraceful things, don't blame me for being harsh!"

The old man's intentions were clear. He was protecting Percival and Vivienne.

If anyone dared to lay a hand on Vivienne, they'd have to get past him first.

Ryan glared at Richard and Vivienne, then asked the butler to find some servants to carry Paul to the car and take him to the hospital.

"Vivienne, I'm sorry for what happened." After dealing with the situation, the old man turned to Vivienne.

"My eldest grandson is a hopeless case." He said with regret all over his face. "I thought as he grew

older, he would become wiser, but he's still as arrogant as ever."

Vivienne, who had enjoyed the show, didn't take it to heart. "Grandpa, it's okay."

Richard had made his stance clear, and there was no need for any self-reproach.

"Yeah, Paul deserves to be punished when he screws up, Vivienne. Don't be too upset." Fiona stepped

in, trying to ease the tension. "There's an art exhibition coming up. Why don't we all go together?

Consider it an apology from the Ellingtons."

The atmosphere finally lightened a bit, and Richard nodded in agreement. "That's right. You youngsters

should go together. Fiona has a good eye for art, so you could learn a lot from her."

Vivienne used to enjoy visiting art exhibitions, but as her schedule got busier, she had less time for

such activities. Now that Fiona had brought it up, she didn't mind giving it a go.

"Sure, I'm up for it."

"Yes, yes, it's good for both families to interact more. After all, we are going to be one big family."

Dorian, who had been standing on the sidelines all this time, finally saw an opportunity to step forward.

"I was scared to death just now. I'm glad you're okay, Vivienne."

This was the Ellington's turf, and when Ryan and Paul stirred up trouble, Dorian had no chance to intervene, nor did he dare to meddle in the Ellington's family affairs.

Now that those who needed to be dealt with were taken care of, he finally stepped up and put on a show of concern.

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Vivienne shot Dorian a frosty glance without uttering a word.

However, Richard was not one to keep his thoughts to himself. "Dorian, if you were so concerned, you should've set Paul straight from the get-go. You didn't utter a single word before. What's holding you back?"

Dorian was left speechless by that blunt comment. With the situation taking a sour turn, Cordelia quickly intervened. "We're outsiders after all. It's not our place to meddle in the Ellingtons' family affairs.

We thought that with Percival and Richard on her side, Vivienne surely wouldn't be bullied."

"Really?" Richard responded in a suggestive tone. "I'm tired. I'm off to get some rest. You all can stay a bit longer."

Quick to reject the invitation, Dorian said, "No need. Thank you for your hospitality, Richard. We don't

want to overstay our welcome.”

Having said that, he naturally wouldn’t insist on staying.

Percival slung his arm around Vivienne’s shoulder. “I’ll walk you out.”

Vivienne glanced at him and smiled. “Sure.”

Percival was silent throughout the incident, but Vivienne could sense his anger. She knew he was holding back out of respect for Richard. That was the only reason he was refraining from taking action against Paul.

But in the end, he couldn’t resist.

That kick certainly did a number on Paul.

Percival and Vivienne led the way, when Dorian and Cordelia awkwardly followed behind them, their expressions subtly changing.

As the dinner progressed, they exposed their true colors.

Vivienne was deliberately testing them, and everyone else was there to watch the drama unfold.

“What do we do now?” Cordelia lowered her voice as she shot Dorian a meaningful glance.

Dorian didn’t utter a word. His gaze was fixed on Vivienne, who was just a few feet away.

If he didn't act soon, he feared...

They had reached the courtyard of the Ellington Estate. Percival was about to fetch the car to drive

Vivienne and the others home when a figure suddenly emerged from the bushes and lunged at

Vivienne.

Percival saw a flash of silver in the stranger's hands as he strode forward. His brow instantly furrowed.

"Vivienne! Look out!"

The voice wasn't Percival's but Dorian's, who was trailing behind them. As Percival shielded Vivienne,

Dorian lunged forward, tackling the intruder.

The stranger swung his knife and slashed Dorian's arm.

Blood spurted out, soaking his shirt.

"Oh my God!"

The sight sent the nearby maid into a panic. Cordelia's legs turned to jelly, making her unable to move

forward. "Dorian!"

After Percival gave the signal, the Ellington bodyguards hidden in the shadows emerged and swiftly

subdued the stranger.

Within two minutes, the situation was under control.

Percival glanced at Vivienne, who looked calm and composed. He then approached the stranger, his

voice steady as he asked, "Who sent you?"

The stranger clamped his mouth shut, refusing to speak.

Percival chuckled coldly. "So you don't want to talk? I have a hundred ways to make you squeal."

With a slight flick of his finger, the guards got the message. They bound the man, ready to take him

away.

"I want answers." Percival's gaze was like an invisible blade that sliced the man's skin. "Go easy on

him."

Death was too easy. He would make that man wish he was never born.

Sometimes the greatest punishment was unbearable suffering.

Whoever dared to harm Vivienne should be prepared for the consequences. He wouldn't let anyone off

who had malicious intentions towards Vivienne.

"Right away, sir."

The guards respectfully acknowledged Percival's orders, then took the stranger away.

"Dorian! Dorian!" Cordelia was frantically crouching beside Dorian. She was on the verge of tears.

"You're bleeding so much!"

Despite his paleness from blood loss, Dorian reassured her. "I'm okay. A little injury won't kill me. As

long as Vivienne is safe, everything is okay."

He turned to Vivienne with a bit of guilt etched on his face. "I'm sorry, Vivienne. I couldn't stand up for

you when the Ellingtons were picking on you. I guess I'm just no match for the Ellingtons."

Vivienne listened to his confession with an impassive face. She only felt annoyed.

Dorian, though lacking ambition, was a decent man. Whenever the Hawthorn or Ellington family tried to

bully her, he would stand up for her without hesitation.

Even when it meant leaving the Hawthorn family and losing his job, Dorian never complained. How

could such a man utter such self-deprecating words?

She looked at Dorian's wound, which, although bloody, wasn't life-threatening.

She ripped a piece of cloth from her dress and bandaged his wound to stop the bleeding.

"You're hurt. Save your strength."

"Vivienne..." Dorian hadn't expected such a cold response from Vivienne. He had risked his life to protect her, yet she wasn't moved.

"Vivienne, your father really cares about you." Cordelia added as her eyes welled up with tears, "We came to Rivenwood because of you. He wanted to start a perfume business to secure your future, in case the Ellingtons ever mistreated you."

She talked like she and Dorian were saints. It was as if everything they did was for Vivienne's sake, and Vivienne was ungrateful for their efforts.

Percival cut them off with an icy stare. "Cordelia, do you think I can't protect Vivienne?"

Cordelia blinked. "That's not what we meant..."

She awkwardly brushed a few strands of hair behind her ear. "We are also Vivienne's family. We're just worried about her."

Dorian deliberately coughed a few times, pretending to be frail. "Percival, I'm all heart but no strength.

From now on, Vivienne is in your hands. Please take good care of her, cough cough..."

Vivienne watched them perform their little drama in front of her as the corner of her mouth twitched

almost imperceptibly.

It was just a minor cut. It barely grazed the skin; it wasn't even touching bone or sinew.

Yet Dorian was acting as if he had contracted a terminal illness. He made it seem like he was barely

able to speak.

Percival saw through his act immediately. "Take Mr. Hawthorn to the hospital." He instructed one of the

servants.

With that, he opened the passenger door, intending to personally escort her home.

"Vivienne..." Cordelia's tone now sounded a bit resentful. "Your father's been injured. Aren't you

coming with us to the hospital?"

"I have other things to do." Vivienne replied indifferently before turning to leave with Percival.

The car rolled out the gates of the Ellington Estate.

Vivienne rested her chin on her hand as she looked out the window with a pensive gaze. "It seems they

can't wait any longer."

"Hmm." Percival's deep eyes narrowed. "I've received word that the human experiments conducted by

GTO have reached a critical stage. They urgently need the potion."

Vivienne scoffed. "No wonder."

"First, we need to find Mr. Hawthorn and Cordelia. I've got people on it, so we should hear something soon."

"Hmm." Vivienne nodded.

She should be getting news on her end as well.

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On the other side, fake Dorian and Cordelia were rushed to the hospital. However, after only half an hour, they slipped out the back door.

Dorian's injuries weren't severe. His pale complexion and weakened body were all effects of pressure-point manipulation.

Vivienne, a skilled doctor, had promptly treated and bandaged him up. So, he was out of danger. After a simple treatment, they stealthily left the hospital.

As soon as they exited the hospital, they received a text message. Their faces changed drastically. It was as if they had seen something unimaginable.

"Quick! Let's go now!" Dorian, not daring to waste any time, started the car and rushed to the outskirts

of the city with Cordelia.

They parked the car next to a villa and entered through a side door. In the living room, a man wearing a silver mask was seated on a sofa. They couldn't see his face, but his chilling aura gave both Dorian and Cordelia shivers.

"Montague..."

BANG!

Before they could finish their sentence, the man suddenly stood up. In the blink of an eye, he was in front of them.

Before they could react, he grabbed their necks, and a deep, husky voice echoed in their ears. "Who gave you the nerve to lay your hands on Vivienne?"

"Montague, I..." Dorian tried to explain but found himself unable to speak.

Seeing this, Cordelia quickly chimed in. "Montague, it wasn't our intention to harm Vivienne. We had no other choice. The organization demanded that we secure the potion as soon as possible. Up to now, we haven't even gotten a single bottle. That's why we had to disguise ourselves as Dorian and

Cordelia."

"Today, we targeted Vivienne because she's too shrewd. If we hadn't done something, she would have realized we were impostors. We just wanted to increase her trust in us to make it easier to get the potion."

Dorian nodded. "That's correct, Montague. We have tried pressing her several times, but Vivienne always refused to give up the potion. Today at the Ellington gathering, our cover was almost blown. Out of desperation, I had to resort to this method."

Montague glanced at them coldly and flung Dorian away.

THUD!

Dorian was thrown against the wall. The intense impact felt like it would shatter his bones, but he dared not make a sound. He stood there with his head bowed in respect.

Montague was a terrifying figure in GTO.

Nobody knew Montague's true identity or what he looked like, but everyone in GTO knew that he was a big shot that no one could mess with. He held absolute power in the organization.

"Montague, Vivienne is cunning. Despite our attempts today, we couldn't get her to let her guard down.

I think we should use Dorian and Cordelia to negotiate with Vivienne." Fake Cordelia suggested.

Dorian nodded in agreement. "That's right. The organization isn't giving us much time. Vivienne cares deeply for Dorian and Cordelia. She would definitely agree to trade the potion for his safety."

Just as he was feeling frustrated, his phone rang.

He answered it, and his face turned pale at what he heard on the other end. "What did you say?!"

The person on the other end was panting heavily. "Our hideouts at the Pleasant Club and Lucky House have been attacked!"

"How is this possible...?" Dorian looked at Montague in disbelief.

Vivienne had found their hideouts and so quickly at that.

"This is a warning." Montague said in a grave voice. "You've been exposed. Evacuate immediately."

"Rest assured, Montague. We'll clean up our traces and leave immediately!" Despite the resentment he was feeling, fake Dorian had no choice but to retreat.

He never expected that Vivienne, whom he had just saved and pretended to share a deep father-daughter bond with, would attack his hideout.

This girl was simply too formidable.

Montague spoke with an authority that made all arguments futile. "Clean everything up. Don't leave any traces."

"Yes!"

Over the next two days, several GTO hideouts were attacked by an unknown person.

Vivienne watched the drama unfold with a light smile. She was waiting for GTO to lose their patience and come to her.

As she was scrolling through her messages in her room, Isolde knocked on her door and asked,

"Vivienne, have you seen Thaddeus?"

Ever since they met at the Ellington family gathering, Isolde would occasionally drop by the Brooks Mansion to hang out with Thaddeus.

They were around the same age, so they always had a blast together, and neither family minded their frequent interactions.

Thus, everyone was pretty laid-back about it. Nobody tried to interfere.

"Thaddeus?" Vivienne got up from her bed. "Isn't he in his room playing with his Lego?"

She had just bought them for him. Thaddeus was so thrilled that the moment he saw them, he took off with them, announcing that he'd put them together immediately.

"Thaddeus isn't in his room." Isolde, clutching her teddy bear, shook her head with a hint of disappointment. "I wanted to play with him, but I can't find Thaddeus anywhere."

The Brooks Mansion was massive. It had multiple floors and even a backyard. It wasn't surprising that she couldn't find him.

Vivienne patted her head in confusion. "How about I go with you to find him?"

"Okay!" Isolde's face lit up instantly, and she hopped with joy.

Vivienne took her by the hand to Thaddeus' room, and, exactly as the little girl said, the room was deserted.

The floor was scattered with half-assembled Lego bricks, meaning that someone had just been there.

Vivienne's brows furrowed slightly, but she didn't say anything. Instead, she took Isolde and headed elsewhere.

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They scoured the entire Brooks residence.

Isolde was worn out, yet there was still no sign of Thaddeus.

"See, I told you, Thaddeus really is missing!" Isolde slumped onto the sofa and looked at Vivienne with wide, innocent eyes.

Vivienne crossed her arms as her face took on a serious expression.

Staying at the Brooks Mansion should have been the safest option for Thaddeus.

The Brooks Mansion had a professional security system, and, furthermore, she was around. If anything were to happen, they would know immediately.

Yet even with all these precautions, Thaddeus disappeared without a trace.

As Vivienne was deep in thought, her phone rang.

After checking, she saw that it was an unknown number.

"Hello?"

She put the phone to her ear, only to hear a harsh voice, which was clearly modified. "Vivienne, there's no need to look anymore. Thaddeus is with us now. I won't waste your time. If you want to keep him alive, you must give me 10 million dollars. I want cash."

Vivienne raised an eyebrow. Her eyes didn't even flicker as she agreed. "Okay."

The caller seemed taken aback by her straightforward response. He coughed before saying, "Good, at least you know what's good for you."

"But don't even think about calling the cops. If you do, I'll make sure the kid pays!"

"I won't call the cops." Vivienne replied calmly. "But if Thaddeus is harmed in any way, I'll make sure you become well acquainted with death himself."

Ten million, 10 million, whatever amount was not an issue for her.

Money was a small matter. However, if someone dared to hurt someone she cared about, it wouldn't end with a visit from the cops.

The person on the other end of the line felt a chill run down their spine but still feigned composure.

"Have the money ready by the end of today. I'll tell you where to drop it off later."

The kidnapper had a pompous demeanor, making it seem like if their instructions were not followed,

Thaddeus might end up dead.

"I have 10 million." Vivienne replied casually. "But you're asking for cash. Even the bank needs time to prepare that."

While speaking, she pulled out a second phone, and her fingers swiftly moved across the screen.

The kidnapper paused, then replied, "Then by tomorrow! No more delays! I don't care how you get it!

But I want to see 10 million in cash by tomorrow!"

After saying that, they promptly hung up. Vivienne glanced at the results displayed on her second phone.

The tracking had failed. They had used a counter-tracking system, making it impossible to locate them.

It was a well-prepared plan.

Vivienne nodded thoughtfully. It seemed that they hadn't acted on a whim but had a detailed plan in place.

"Sis..." Isolde, sitting nearby, tugged at Vivienne's sleeve anxiously. "Will Thaddeus be okay?"

She didn't quite understand the conversation over the phone, but from what Vivienne was saying, she could sense something was wrong.

"Don't worry, he'll be fine."

If she said she could do it, she could do it. Those who dared to target Thaddeus were the ones making the biggest mistake.

"Vivienne!"

As Vivienne was thinking her next move, Judith came rushing in with the house staff. "There's a ransom note in our mailbox! It says they've got Thaddeus, and they're asking for 10 million dollars!"

Vivienne frowned. A ransom note?

A phone call, and now a ransom note. What was their endgame?

"Where's Thaddeus? Is he really missing? This is a serious matter! We can't act rashly!"

Judith was genuinely worried. Although Thaddeus wasn't a direct descendant of the Brooks family, he was one of the people Vivienne cared most about.

Her love for Vivienne extended to those around her. Now that Thaddeus had encountered trouble at the Brooks residence, she was naturally involved.

Soon, the rest of the family heard the commotion and came out of their rooms.

"What's going on? A ransom note?" Melissa and Timothy were the first down the stairs. Their faces were a mixture of shock and confusion. "Who would dare target a member of the Hawthorn clan in such a blatant manner?"

"It's Thaddeus. He's in trouble!" Judith filled them in on the situation as she shook her head in dismay.

"He's just a kid. What a terrible thing to happen to him!"

Ashley and Carl followed closely, with Paula trailing behind. She went to Havenwood a few days ago

but hadn't been able to find Katara.

After returning to Rivenwood, she came to the Brooks Mansion.

Unless Katara was found, she wouldn't let any person with the last name Brooks have peace.

She walked slowly as a scornful look adorned her face. "He's nothing but bad luck! Wherever he goes,

trouble follows. Now he's shamelessly staying at the Brooks Mansion and causing trouble for the

family!"

"Paula!" Vivienne watched her coldly, but before she could say anything, Judith snapped. "Thaddeus is

Vivienne's brother! He's part of our family! How can you say such things?"

"Mother! Are you losing your mind?" Paula retorted irritably. "He's not her real brother, and he's

certainly not a direct descendant of the Brooks family! First it was her adoptive parents; now it's her

brother?! This house is full of outsiders brought in by Vivienne!"

Vivienne hadn't even revealed Dorian and Cordelia's identities yet. They were still residing at the

Brooks Mansion.

Even if they were not home at the moment, it didn't stop Paula from pointing fingers at them.

"What's this talk about 'outsiders'?" Carl said dismissively and firmly took Vivienne's side. "We're all part of the Brooks family. Do we really need to split hairs over this?"

Melissa chipped in, trying to smooth things over. "Paula, Thaddeus is Vivienne's brother. His problems are our problems. There's no need to be so nitpicky."

"Me? Nitpicky?"

Paula sneered. She looked around the room with a shocked expression. It was as if everyone had been brainwashed by Vivienne. "If I don't stand my ground, who knows who'll be running the family now?"

"Enough! Pipe down!" Judith cut her off. Her brows were deeply furrowed. "Is this really what's important right now? The main concern here is Thaddeus' safety!"

Vivienne silently watched them bicker with an inscrutable poker face.

Only one possibility could explain Thaddeus being taken away from the Brooks Mansion. Someone in

the family must have helped.

Interesting...

"That's 10 million we're talking about!" Paula wouldn't back down. "Why should the Brooks family shell out that much for an outsider?"

10 million might not be a big deal for the Brooks family, but it mattered who the money was being spent on.

"I'll foot the bill." Vivienne cut her off. She had more than enough money. It was just a matter of whether

the other party had the guts to take it from her.

"You'll pay?" Paula scoffed. "Where would you get all that money from? Isn't it all from our family? And you have the audacity to flaunt it?! You've got some nerve!"

Vivienne looked at her impassively and casually tossed a bank statement onto the table. "There's 100 million here. If anything happens to Thaddeus, I won't let the perpetrator off the hook."

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Paula was shaken by Vivienne's stern gaze, and her eyes darted away nervously.

"Indeed, money is secondary." Carl frowned. "We need to think about how to bring Thaddeus back!"

"The kidnapper wants cash! We need to withdraw 10 million in cash right now!"

Judith, despite being the eldest, was quite lucid. "You guys should get to the bank immediately!"

"Madam!" As everyone was discussing, the servant hurriedly rushed in. "Mr. Ellington is here."

As soon as the servant reported this, Percival strode into the living room. His gaze swept over those present before settling on Vivienne.

"Money is not a concern." He walked to Vivienne's side and calmly said, "I have already prepared 10 million in cash."

"Mr. Wolf?" Vivienne was taken aback by his sudden appearance. "Why are you here?"

He already seemed to know all about Thaddeus and even had the ransom ready in advance.

"The ransom note was also sent to the Ellington family." Percival explained simply, "Don't worry, the money is in the van outside."

As soon as the news reached the Ellington family, they became very concerned. He had immediately contacted the bank to prepare the cash.

"Thank you." Vivienne whispered.

Although she could also get 10 million quickly, she was touched that Percival had delivered it so

promptly.

"No need for thanks between us." Percival's voice was tinged with a hint of indulgence.

Now that the ransom issue was solved, the next step was to deliver it to the kidnappers.

For Thaddeus' safety, they didn't call the police. All they could do was wait.

Percival sat with Vivienne in the courtyard, asking, "Do we have any leads on who the kidnapper is?"

"It doesn't matter who the kidnapper is. What matters is who's pulling the strings behind the scenes."

Vivienne's eyes flashed coldly.

After seeing Vivienne's calm demeanor, Percival understood what was in her mind. "You already have an answer?"

Vivienne narrowed her eyes as her calm and steady tone was replaced by a dangerous and

threatening one. "They've been too foolish. It would be hard not to know."

If it weren't for the certainty that Thaddeus was safe, she wouldn't be so calm.

The reason she was waiting was to see what the other party was planning.

Percival smirked. "It seems like someone is not satisfied with their easy life."

Vivienne raised an eyebrow, and a smile appeared in the corner of her eyes. "Indeed."

Because the matter concerned Vivienne, the Ellington family also took it very seriously.

Although Richard couldn't come in person due to his health, he still sent other members of the Ellington family to check on the situation.

Cathy and Paul, the wife and son of Richard's eldest son, and Fiona, the daughter of his second son, all rushed to the Brooks Mansion.

At ten o'clock in the evening, the kidnapper called again.

The entire call lasted only half a minute. The other party was concise, and their goal was clear.

They wanted Vivienne to drive alone to Sun Park to deliver the ransom.

As soon as this request was heard, Paula was the first to object. "Why should Vivienne deliver the ransom?! She's just a girl! What does she know?! She'll be scared stiff when she meets the kidnapper!"

Ashley, sitting nearby, asked with a hint of amusement. "Paula, the kidnapper specifically asked for Vivienne to deliver the money. If she doesn't go, we'd be basically signing Thaddeus' death certificate."

"Exactly." Carl chimed in. "Paula, what are you trying to do? You're picking on Vivienne at every turn.

Are you deliberately making life difficult for her?"

Paula was almost choked by the remarks of her nephew and niece.

"What do you two know?!"

She glared at Vivienne with eyes full of distrust and suspicion. "Who knows?! She might even be in cahoots with the kidnapper! She's just trying to swindle the Brooks family's money!"

Everyone present was nearly amused by Paula's logic.

Vivienne was doing this to swindle the Brooks family's money?

From the beginning, Vivienne had said that she would pay the ransom. She even took out her bank card before Percival personally brought 10 million in cash.

Whether the money was given by her or Percival, it had nothing to do with the Brooks family. It was all arranged by Vivienne and Percival.

To say that Vivienne was going through all this trouble with the goal of obtaining the Brooks family's money was ridiculous.

"Shut up!" Judith couldn't stand it any longer and threw a coffee cup at Paula.

The coffee cup grazed Paula's foot on its way down, shattered against the table leg, and splashed

coffee all over her.

"Ah!" Paula was so startled that she nearly jumped. She looked at her mother in anger and annoyance

as she asked, "Mom, what are you doing?"

"What am I doing? I want to ask what are you trying to do!" Judith questioned her angrily. "Right now,

Vivienne's brother is missing, and you're just causing a commotion here! You're not helping at all, but

just making things worse! If you want to keep making a fuss, get out of here now! Don't think that just

because your father isn't here, you can act recklessly!"

"I..." Paula knew she was in the wrong and glared at Vivienne. She finally shut up.

Annoying the old lady was not a good idea. She knew that when Judith got serious, she was no easier

to deal with than Baron.

"Alright, I think it's best to leave this matter to Vivienne."

Without Paula's ruckus, the living room finally quieted down, and Judith could finally voice her thoughts.

"Since the kidnapper specifically asked for Vivienne, it wouldn't be appropriate to send someone else."

The kidnapper's voice on the phone sounded as hard as stone, insinuating that any deviation from his

instructions, like having someone else deliver the ransom, would put Thaddeus in grave danger.

"But isn't it too risky to let Vivienne go alone?" Melissa voiced her concerns.

She wasn't the only one who was worried. Percival also shared her apprehensions.

He had faith in Vivienne's capabilities and trusted her to handle the situation calmly and effectively.

However, he couldn't bear the thought of her being in any kind of danger. He wanted her to be completely safe.

"Vivienne, perhaps it's better if I..." Percival wanted to intervene, but was quickly interrupted by Vivienne.

"No need," she said. "I can handle this on my own."

She was determined to meet the kidnapper face-to-face and bring Thaddeus home safely.

Seeing her resolve, both the Brooks and the Ellington family members couldn't object.

After all, Thaddeus was Vivienne's brother. No one else had the right to make this decision for her.

A small van loaded with cash was parked in the driveway of the Brooks Mansion. Vivienne, composed as ever, got into the van, buckled up, and took the phone that served as her line of communication with the kidnapper.

Percival stood outside the van. "Be careful out there. Don't get hurt."

"Alright." Vivienne nodded, started the van, and drove off in the direction of Sun Park.

The members of the Brooks and Ellington families stood at the entrance, watching as the van gradually disappeared into the distance.

A smirk slowly appeared on someone's face.

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Sun Park was a park in name, but it had been abandoned for many years.

Tucked away in a remote location and overrun with weeds, it was rarely visited during the day, let alone at the witching hour of eleven at night.

Vivienne drove the van into the park, parking it next to a statue and killing the engine.

The kidnappers had chosen this location for the drop-off. It was a place so quiet that you could hear a pin drop. It didn't look like a place anyone would be.

Vivienne looked around and casually said, "If you've called me here, there's no need to keep hiding."

Hardly had her words faded when about a dozen masked men emerged from the bushes, immediately surrounding her.

Each one held a sharp dagger with a blade that gleamed menacingly under the moonlight, and the tips

were tinged with a sinister hue.

Poison!

Vivienne couldn't help but smirk. It seemed like these guys were determined to end her life.

"Where's my brother?" She had no time to play cat and mouse with them, so she cut straight to the chase.

The leader of the masked men was momentarily stunned, then began heartily laughing. "You're still worried about your brother? Do you really think you're going to walk out of here alive?"

They had been given a kill order. No matter what, they had to kill Vivienne.

Whoever could deliver Vivienne's head would not only get the ransom but an additional 20 million dollars.

Which assassin wouldn't be tempted by the prospect of receiving 30 million dollars for the head of a seemingly defenseless young woman?

"It's just you guys?" Vivienne responded with a sarcastic smile.

Had it been so long since she had flexed her muscles that they thought she was incapable of defending

herself?

"Do you have any idea how much your head is worth?" The leader drawled. "Coming here today was a mistake!"

"Attack!" With a sudden command, he brandished his dagger, and the others followed suit. They all lunged at Vivienne with murderous intent.

But they barely managed to take one step toward her. With a mere flick of her finger, they suddenly collapsed to the ground, limp as marionettes.

"What's happening? Why can't I move?"

The masked men were shocked to find their limbs devoid of strength. Their mouths were the only part of them still able to move.

Forget about killing Vivienne; they couldn't even save themselves now.

"What did you do to us?" The leader growled.

As Vivienne listened to their frustrated yells, she casually walked up to them and said, "I told you, you can't touch me."

In the instant they had lunged for her, she had sprinkled a powder she had developed herself that left

them incapacitated.

"Where is my brother?" She asked as she looked down at them coldly.

"You're bluffing! We will never tell you where your brother is! Stop dreaming!"

The masked men remained defiant, seemingly not believing Vivienne held any significant power.

"Very well." Vivienne nodded and pulled out a silver needle from her pocket.

Without even bending down, she threw it towards the leader of the masked men.

Three silver needles accurately hit his pressure points. The next moment, he broke into a wailing

cacophony of laughter and tears. "It hurts! It's so itchy! What's happening?!"

He felt as if a thousand ants were crawling on his back and a scorpion had stung him at the same time.

His back was soon soaked in cold sweat. It was as if he had just been pulled out of the water.

"Help! I apologize! I won't do it again! Please let me go!"

The leader was begging mindlessly. He was relentlessly pleading with Vivienne to spare him.

Vivienne easily removed the needles from his body, and he finally calmed down while gasping for

breath on the ground.

Vivienne looked at the masked men sprawled on the ground and asked, "Who else wants to try?"

Try their ass!

The masked men internally swore that they would never let themselves go through that.

Who would want to experience that kind of pain and torment?

They had underestimated the beautiful girl standing before them.

Without drawing a weapon or shedding blood, she had managed to inflict unbearable pain on their
steadfast leader.

It wasn't physical torture, but it looked more unbearable.

"We were wrong, Vivienne. Please show us mercy; we won't ever do it again!"

The masked men looked at each other and bowed their heads in submission, pleading for Vivienne's
forgiveness. "We promise to avoid you in the future, Vivienne. We won't offend you again."

"Answer two questions." Vivienne pulled out an antidote from her pocket and waved it at them. "I can
give you the antidote."

"Ask away! We'll tell you everything we know!"

"Where is my brother right now?"

The masked men's leader immediately answered. "Thaddeus is in an abandoned factory in the West District. He is fine; he's just tied up."

"Good." Vivienne nodded. She was satisfied with the answer. "Second question, who ordered you to kidnap Thaddeus and lure me here?"

Thaddeus being kidnapped was just a smokescreen.

On the surface, the kidnappers wanted a ransom, but they were actually after her life.

As soon as she appeared as agreed, the masked men would swarm her and end her life.

"This..." The masked man hesitated, realizing that if he confessed, his fate would be dire.

But if he didn't, Vivienne wouldn't spare him either.

"Seems like the pain wasn't enough?" Noticing his hesitation, Vivienne brought out the silver needles again. "How about we add two more and see how that feels?"

"No, no, no!" The masked man was so scared that he almost bit his tongue. "I'll talk! I'll talk!"

He did not want to experience that inhuman torture again.

"It was Paul, the eldest grandson of the Ellington family."

Paul?

He was the expected culprit, but Vivienne didn't expect him to have the guts to plan this.

Vivienne raised her hand again, scattering another type of powder.

The next second, the masked men were surprised to find that they could move their hands and feet again.

This miraculous powder was the first of its kind they had encountered. How was it capable of instantly paralyzing a person's nerves and then restoring them in an instant?

"Thank you for keeping your promise, Vivienne. We are eternally grateful!"

After their brief encounter, the masked men realized Vivienne was not someone to be trifled with.

She could easily take down a dozen men or more. Her hidden strength was akin to that of an iceberg submerged in water.

Competing with her was like throwing an egg at a rock.

"Where's your vehicle?"

The van was too cumbersome. She needed something lighter for her operations.

The masked figure quickly brought out one of the smaller cars and handed it over to Vivienne.

"This vehicle is yours now." Vivienne gestured to the van nearby. "You can do whatever you want with the money in the van, but as for Paul..."

She paused for a brief moment, and the masked figure understood what she meant. "We get it; we get it. We'll teach him a lesson for you."

Not only did Vivienne spare their lives, but she also kept her promise, giving them a ransom of 10 million dollars.

Where else could they find such a good deal? The masked men naturally wanted to show their gratitude.

Vivienne got into the car and drove towards the abandoned factory in the west district, following the directions they gave her.

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Half an hour later, Vivienne reached her destination. It was an eerily desolate spot, with nary a soul in sight. It was just a landscape of iron and brick.

Without much effort, she found Thaddeus in a corner of the warehouse, bound, blindfolded, and shivering with fear.

"Thaddeus." Vivienne stepped forward and untied him. "It's okay now. Don't be afraid."

Thaddeus, who had been shaking in fear, finally relaxed as he heard her voice.

After releasing him from his shackles, he couldn't help but burst into tears and throw himself into her arms. "Sis!"

"Don't be afraid; I'm here." Vivienne comforted him in a low voice.

"Sis, she... she wanted to harm me..." Thaddeus was crying so hard that he could hardly breathe; his small face was turning bright red.

Suppressing her inner fury, Vivienne asked softly, "Who was it?"

Stammering, Thaddeus revealed the person's name, causing Vivienne to scoff.

As she suspected, this was indeed an inside job. Someone within the Brooks family had helped those men; otherwise, things would not have gone so smoothly.

The only plausible explanation for slipping past the Brooks Mansion's security system was an internal betrayal.

"Let's go home." She patted Thaddeus on the back and took his hand.

"But sis..." Thaddeus was clearly still traumatized by the incident.

"I'm scared..." He timidly said.

"You don't have to be afraid of anything." Vivienne's gaze was resolute, and each word was laced with a promise of retribution. "I'll get justice for you."

At 1:00 am, Vivienne returned to the Brooks Mansion with Thaddeus.

The entire Brooks Mansion was brightly lit, and everyone was still waiting for their return.

"Vivienne! Thaddeus!" Upon seeing them return safely, Judith was both relieved and terrified. She rushed over and embraced them. "You scared me to death! You were gone for so long, and we heard nothing from you. I was beside myself with worry!"

"We're fine. Thaddeus is okay." Vivienne knew Judith was genuinely concerned and responded calmly and softly. "It just took a bit longer."

"That's okay! As long as you both are home safe and sound, everything else is trivial."

A servant immediately brought over some water. Judith showered Thaddeus with concern. "Are you hurt? You must've been terrified. Now that you're back, no one can harm you again."

Percival stood nearby, watching Judith fuss over Vivienne and Thaddeus. He stepped forward and

asked, "Are you hungry? I had food prepared."

"A little." She smiled at him, but soon her smile faded. "But there's something we need to deal with first."

As she spoke, Vivienne turned to look at Paul, who was sitting nervously in a corner. "Thaddeus had an incident. Paul, don't you have anything to say?"

Caught off guard, Paul jumped up, quickly revealing his vicious side. "What does this have to do with me? Your brother is the one who got kidnapped, which caused chaos in the Ellington family. We all had to make an extra trip because of it, and yet you're asking me questions?"

Cathy didn't say anything, but her thoughts mirrored her son's.

Was it worth all this fuss for a brother with no blood ties?

Fiona sat silently beside them, not joining the conversation and quietly watching the drama unfold.

"I'm giving you one last chance." Vivienne stared at him coldly.

"Screw your chance! I don't need it!" Ignoring her, Paul was about to storm off when Vivienne's swift action caused his knees to buckle, and he fell to the ground.

Vivienne took out her phone and played a video. "Why don't you watch this first, then decide if you

want to explain?"

The video showed the masked men who had kidnapped Thaddeus and attacked her.

The leader was talking directly to the camera. "This was all Paul's idea, the eldest grandson of the Ellington family."

"He asked us to kidnap Thaddeus, so we could lure you out alone by asking you to deliver the ransom and then take you out."

The mention of Paul caused everyone present to gasp in surprise, and they turned their heads to look at him.

Paul's face turned pale. He sat on the ground, unable to utter a single word.

The video continued.

Vivienne asked, "So his goal was my life?"

The leader nodded repeatedly. "Paul said to leave no witnesses and to make your death as painful as possible."

"How did you enter the Brooks Mansion and take Thaddeus?"

The masked man answered truthfully. "Someone inside the Brooks Mansion helped us. We didn't need to find a way in."

The video ended there. Vivienne put away her phone and looked at Paul again. "Don't you want to explain?"

Everyone from the Brooks and Ellington families was still in shock. They were unable to process what they'd just heard.

They didn't know whether they should be more surprised that Paul had hired the assassin or that there was a traitor within the Brooks family.

"How do we know you didn't fake the video?!"

Paul was still struggling and arguing angrily. "You're trying to frame me! You just want to throw mud at me! You want to keep me from inheriting the Ellington family's fortune!"

Vivienne threw a pile of documents on the ground. "These are your call logs and transfer records."

Clearly outlined were the details of how Paul had personally sought out these assassin and paid them a deposit to carry out their heinous acts.

"These are all lies!" Paul blustered angrily.

He loathed Vivienne with every fiber of his being. From the moment she stepped foot into the Ellington family, his wave of misfortune began.

For no apparent reason, he was scolded by the old man, got himself into a whole lot of trouble, and nearly had his manhood crushed by Percival when he tried to get closer to her.

Even today, he could still feel a dull ache down there.

"Vivienne, you witch! You're behind all this! You'll get what's coming to you!" Paul screamed hysterically.

Cathy hurriedly jumped in to back him up. "Paul would never do such a thing! It must be Vivienne setting him up!"

They had barely finished hurling their accusations when Percival's gaze turned icy cold.

With just a look, his men immediately understood, stepped forward, and delivered a ferocious slap to Paul, sending him sprawling to the ground.

Paul was hit so hard that he almost spat out blood. His ribs snapped with the force of the blow.

"How dare you! How could you lay a hand on my son?!" Cathy was furious. She was ready to fight for

her son. However, the next moment, there was a knock at the door of the Brooks Mansion.

A police officer, led by one of the servants, walked in.

"We've received a distress call." The officer said while looking at Paul crumpled on the floor. "You're suspected of kidnapping and attempted murder. Please come with us."

"No! No!" Paul's world was crumbling. "I can't go to the police station! I can't go to jail! It will ruin my

life!"

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Paul was struggling with all his might. He was desperate, and his voice was so hoarse that it began to hurt.

He was the eldest grandson of the Ellington family and the future heir. How could he risk having a criminal record? It was a stain he couldn't wash away, one that would haunt him forever.

Every word Paul spoke was followed by a violent cough. The pain from his fractured ribs was nearly unbearable.

His mother, Cathy, was in disbelief. She relentlessly pleaded with the police to let him go. "Officers, there must be some misunderstanding! My boy could never commit a crime. He's innocent! It's all

Vivienne's doing! She's trying to frame him! You should be arresting her! She's the real criminal!"

Cathy was crying and making a scene, but the police paid her no mind and took away a weak-legged

Paul.

She followed them while crying and pounding on the police car, refusing to leave.

The police, citing obstruction of justice, took Cathy along as well.

With Paul and Cathy gone, the Brooks household finally quieted down.

Everyone had been spectators to the drama all night, with each one lost in their thoughts.

"Alright, it's getting late." Paula said, clearing her throat to break the silence. "I think we should all get some rest."

"Hold on." Vivienne looked at her and spoke with an indifferent tone. "You seem to have forgotten something."

"Right." Ashley added. "They caught the one who kidnapped Thaddeus, but the insider in the Brooks family hasn't been found yet."

"An insider?!" Paula immediately lost her temper and began shouting, "Just because those people said so, you believe them? They're just trying to deflect the blame! No member of the Brooks family would

ever do such things. Stop making false accusations!"

"No one said it was you." Judith retorted while giving Paula a sidelong glance. "Why are you so defensive?"

"Maybe she feels guilty." Carl hinted. "She's always disliked Vivienne, so it's not surprising that she's involved in this mess."

"Nonsense!" Paula was about to lose her cool. "A video can't prove anything! It's all a lie!"

"But Paul has been taken away by the police." Ashley looked at Judith's expression. "Could this all be fake?"

Everyone knew Paula's bias against Vivienne, and now there was video evidence to boot.

Although no one directly accused her, her sudden hostility suggested a guilty conscience.

"Thaddeus." Vivienne didn't say much and just gently touched Thaddeus' head. "Tell me, who took you away from here?"

Thaddeus looked up at her, then glanced fearfully at the others. "Sis... I..."

"You don't need to be afraid." Judith comforted him gently. "Your grandmother will back you up. Just tell

the truth."

"It was... it was..." Thaddeus hesitated, but after finding courage from Vivienne's presence, he finally

spoke. "It was Paula."

"You're lying!" Paula immediately rushed over and attempted to hit him. "Who taught you to say these

things?! It's Vivienne; it must be Vivienne!"

Percival grabbed Paula's hand and shoved her aside.

Paula stumbled and fell, twisting her ankle and instantly turning pale from pain.

"The truth is out. Do you still want to deny it, Paula?" Carl challenged her. "I didn't expect you, of all

people, to be so cruel!"

Judith was utterly disappointed. "Thaddeus is just a child. Why would he lie?!"

"You've made so many mistakes, and we, as a family, have always turned a blind eye. But now you're

helping outsiders hurt your own family?! How could you betray us like this?!"

"Mom!" Paula's eyes were bloodshot as she glared at Vivienne, wishing she could tear her apart at this

very moment. "Don't you know? It's all Vivienne's fault! She's ruined our family! She's back, but my

Katara is still missing!"

"How could you still be harping on about this?!" Judith couldn't comprehend her anymore. "Scott's mistake was unintentional, and he's been trying his best to help you find her all these years. How can you blame everything on him and even drag Vivienne into it?!"

Was a simple apology for an unintentional mistake supposed to ease her hatred?

She lost her precious daughter. She hadn't seen her for years, and she didn't even know if she was well. How could she not hate them?

"Tell me!" Paula's voice was sharp. It pierced their ears like a needle. "Where is my daughter?! Give me back my daughter!"

Vivienne frowned and looked at her without any expression on her face. "You're asking me about your daughter's whereabouts?"

"You know! You must know!" Paula screamed as her veins bulged. Her expression was somewhat ferocious. "My Katara lived in Havenwood. Her name there is Arabella Hawthorn! She was adopted by your foster parents!"

She had gone to Havenwood to find Katara and confirmed that Arabella was her daughter. But she

didn't know where she had gone.

The last person to see Arabella was Tristan.

Tristan was Scott's adopted son, and Vivienne's mother saved his life when he was young.

Connecting the timing of Arabella's disappearance with Vivienne, Paula concluded that Vivienne must have ordered Tristan to harm Arabella.

She hated Scott, hated Tristan, and hated Vivienne even more.

If it weren't for Vivienne, her Katara would still be the little lady of the Brooks family, living a life of luxury.

It was all Vivienne's doing. She was the one who destroyed Katara's happiness.

She was the one responsible for Katara's current predicament. Her whereabouts were unknown. She was suffering somewhere out there.

Vivienne blinked. A hint of surprise flickered in her eyes while Percival, by her side, frowned slightly, as if he were trying to make sense of something.

"Paula, are you sure? Arabella is really your daughter?" Judith asked as her voice trembled with disbelief.

She hadn't forgotten the way Arabella had behaved when they first brought her home.

"Of course, I'm sure!" Paula's voice was hoarse from shouting. "I've been searching for her for so many years. Do you think I wouldn't recognize my own daughter?!"

"Let's not forget what Arabella has done." Carl immediately jumped in. "She deceived us by tampering with the DNA tests multiple times, all to be the heiress of the Brooks family. She was lying right up until the end."

"Arabella was tricked too!" Paula wasn't listening. All she wanted was her daughter. "Give me back my daughter! Give me back my Katara!"

She tried to get up to throttle Vivienne, but her twisted ankle was swollen like a loaf of bread. It throbbed with pain at the slightest movement.

"I couldn't care less about where Arabella is." Vivienne crossed her arms. Each word was a slap to

Paula's face. "But as for your fate, I know it all too well."

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Paula's face was devoid of warmth. There was a rare hint of fear in her eyes.

"What are you planning?"

“Scared?” Vivienne asked softly. “Too late for that now.”

She didn’t mind seeing Paula and Arabella meet the same fate. It would only barely satisfy her.

“Vivienne...” Judith hesitated before speaking. “Let me deal with Paula.”

She wasn’t attempting to defend Paula. She despised the mistakes Paula had made just as much.

But they were blood-related, and she couldn’t bear to see Paula in such a miserable state.

Vivienne looked at her and, in a neutral tone, asked. “And how would you deal with her?”

“I promise you’ll be satisfied.” Judith turned to Paula. “Paula, what you did today was way out of line!

Vivienne is Scott’s daughter. She’s a member of the Brooks family. How could you be so cruel?”

“Why shouldn’t I be cruel?” Paula had lost her rationality. “He separated me and my daughter for over a decade! I just want his daughter to have a taste of suffering!” She yelled.

“You’ve lost your mind! Enough! From now on, you’re not allowed to ever come back here. We have no ties with you anymore.”

“Mom! You...” Paula looked at Judith in disbelief.

Her confidence came from knowing that her mother would always protect her, no matter what. But now,

even her mother didn't want her to return to the Brooks home.

She even wanted to sever their relationship.

"I don't want to say anything harsher." Judith turned, refusing to look at her. "Take care of yourself.

Jacob, escort her out!"

She still felt motherly love for her. She couldn't completely forget Paula.

But she had reached her limit. She even had the servants drive Paula out directly.

"Mom! For Vivienne's sake, you're even giving up on your own daughter?!" Paula yelled hoarsely,

struggling in vain as the servants supported her. Finally, she was thrown out of the Brooks Mansion.

Vivienne watched Paula being escorted out as the smile on her lips grew colder.

Was this the answer the Brooks family was giving her?

Ha!

Feeling her change in emotion, Percival wrapped his arm around her waist and whispered into her ear.

"Leave it to me; I'll handle it."

Vivienne looked at him and smiled lightly. "Alright."

She had faith in her Mr. Wolf. He would handle it well.

At least better than the Brooks family.

The drama finally ended.

Fiona stood up. "Now that Vivienne's brother has been found, I should get going. Grandfather is waiting for news. I need to update him on the situation."

Percival nodded as his unreadable gaze swept over her.

Fiona couldn't decipher his expression, but it made her feel cold. It was as if she had been pricked by a needle.

Fiona hurriedly left.

Judith sat on the couch, holding her forehead. "Vivienne, I apologize for the spectacle. I didn't educate Paula well, causing her to behave so poorly and make you and your brother suffer."

Vivienne looked at her deeply and smiled brightly. "I'm not suffering."

No one could make her suffer.

If she were unhappy, she would solve it her own way.

Judith held her hand and patted the back of it. "If anyone dares to bully you in the future, just tell me. I

won't let it slide!"

"Mmm." Vivienne replied lightly, not saying anything else.

...

Late at night.

In fake Dorian and Cordelia's room.

Vivienne sat on a chair in the room, casually playing with a ring in her hand.

Half an hour later, the door opened.

Fake Dorian was about to turn on the lights when he heard a cold voice. "Mr. Hawthorn, Cordelia."

Fake Dorian and Cordelia didn't expect anyone to be in their room. They froze, and their expressions became stiff.

In the darkness, they looked at each other before turning on the lights.

Vivienne was lounging on the chair. Her eyes were cold as she watched them, looking at them like they were prey.

"Vivienne? What are you doing here?" Fake Dorian asked, feeling unsettled under her gaze.

He knew Vivienne knew he wasn't the real Dorian. But since she didn't expose him, he continued to

play along.

But now that Vivienne was waiting for them, he knew something bad was about to happen.

Vivienne glanced at him casually. "Why are you back so late?"

Fake Dorian forced a smile, pretending to be tired. "Cordelia and I were working on company matters, so we came back late."

"Is that so?" Vivienne raised an eyebrow. "So you didn't know Thaddeus was kidnapped?"

"Thaddeus was kidnapped?" Fake Dorian and Cordelia exchanged a glance and frowned.

What happened?

They didn't order anyone to kidnap Thaddeus.

Who acted on their own?

Vivienne's eyes rose slightly, watching fake Dorian and fake Cordelia without a word.

Fake Dorian felt uneasy under her gaze. He laughed awkwardly. "Vivienne, why are you staring at us?"

Did I say something wrong?"

Vivienne withdrew her gaze and calmly said, "No, I'm just informing you that Thaddeus has been

rescued.”

Fake Dorian hadn't relaxed when Vivienne changed the subject. “Did you meet with GTO?”

Fake Dorian's heart jumped. “What do you mean?”

“Mistaking my taste, messing up the dishes, and other series of mistakes. Is this the level of GTO's people?” Vivienne looked at them expressionlessly.

"Vivienne, are you okay? You're not making any sense." Fake Cordelia said as a look of unease washed over her face.

Fake Dorian quickly added, "Yeah, if you're tired, get some rest. We need you well-rested. We don't want you to get sick. Cordelia and I would worry."

"Rowan and Ismene." Vivienne calmly uttered their names.

Rowan and Ismene froze in shock!

She knew they were impostors, and she even knew their names?!

How could this be?

Few people within their organization knew their real names. How had Vivienne found out?

After a moment of shock, Rowan collected himself. In an instant, his demeanor changed from gentle to

harsh. "Since you've figured it out, there's nothing more to discuss! You won't get a word about GTO

from us, let alone the whereabouts of Dorian and Cordelia!"

If she managed to rescue Dorian and Cordelia, they would completely lose their bargaining chip.

"I never intended to get their location from you." Vivienne said.

Rowan was taken aback, but before he could respond, Vivienne raised her hand.

His vision went black, and he and Ismene collapsed.

While looking down at the unconscious pair, Vivienne's expression remained cold.

At that moment, Matthew climbed in through the window, landing lightly in front of her. "Vivienne."

"Take them away. Lock them up somewhere secure."

"Understood."

With that, Matthew hoisted up the unconscious duo and carried them out.

Chapter 330

The following day.

After breakfast, Vivienne was out the door. She made a beeline for Percival's apartment.

Percival, an early riser, had been waiting for her.

As she stepped in, Percival gestured towards the table, saying, "This is what you asked me to prepare."

Late last night, Vivienne messaged him to get some materials ready.

The items on the table were for a disguise. Vivienne quickly scanned them over before she began to transform her appearance.

"You should get ready too." She instructed him as she put on her makeup.

Percival raised an eyebrow and asked, "So we're pretending to be Dorian and Cordelia?"

"Exactly." Vivienne nodded.

If GTO could disguise themselves as her adoptive parents to deceive her, she would certainly return the favor.

Vivienne swiftly completed her own disguise, then turned her attention to Percival.

...

An hour later.

Percival looked at the slightly aged face in the mirror, admiring Vivienne's skill.

The disguise was flawless. Vivienne, a master of disguise, had left no room for suspicion.

After they were disguised, Vivienne took out the phone she had taken from Rowan. She installed a voice changer, then dialed the number of a GTO member.

"We have crucial information to report about the potion. We need to meet right away."

"Three o'clock, Sunshine Plaza."

With some time to spare before the meeting, the pair grabbed a quick bite to eat before heading to Sunshine Plaza.

The bustling mall was in the heart of the city. It was swarming with people.

Arm in arm, they strolled through the mall, appearing like an ordinary married couple.

Percival suddenly felt a sense of normalcy. He imagined growing old with Vivienne and enjoying a leisurely world of their own.

"Vivienne..." Percival's eyes held a warm affection as he began to speak.

But an incoming call interrupted him.

Vivienne took out the phone, activated the voice changer, and asked, "We're here. Where are you?"

"Second floor, luxury goods area." A middle-aged man's very deep voice answered.

Vivienne and Percival exchanged looks. "We'll be right there."

They headed to the second floor but saw no man of that age waiting for them.

The phone rang again.

"Come to the Illuminated Bistro on the seventh floor."

Vivienne's brow furrowed, and she feigned anger. "Are you messing with us?"

The man on the phone laughed. "Why would I do that? Okay, I'm at the dessert shop on the fourth floor."

The man reported his real location, but Vivienne coldly responded. "We're waiting for you at the handbag store on the second floor."

She paused before adding, "We'll wait for five minutes. If you're late, we're leaving."

She ended the call, giving the man no chance to respond.

"Damn it!" The man on the other end cursed under his breath and put his phone away.

Four minutes later.

A girl in a hoodie approached with a bouquet of flowers. She tugged on Percival's sleeve. "Sir, buy a rose for your wife. It's only five bucks."

Percival glanced at her with a deep gaze. Then he smirked. "Alright."

He pulled out fifty dollars and bought all the flowers she had. "I'll take them all."

He then handed the large bouquet of roses to Vivienne.

Vivienne held the heavy bouquet, but her gaze stayed on the girl. A small smile appeared on her lips as

she said, "Quincy?"

Quincy was the code name of their liaison.

The girl winked at them, covered her mouth, and changed her voice to a hoarse, manly tone. "You

recognized me?"

Vivienne smirked. "Your disguise is terrible."

"Rowan, I've heard of you too." Quincy looked at Percival. "Your disguise skills are impeccable. No one

in GTO could beat you."

For this mission, the organization had prepared two teams.

Rowan and Ismene were to disguise themselves as the Dorian couple, gain Vivienne's trust, and obtain

the potion from her.

Meanwhile, Quincy was tasked with taking the potion at the crucial moment.

Two days ago, when Rowan's base in Rivenwood was attacked, the organization immediately had

Quincy take over Dorian.

If anything were to happen to Rowan's side, she would lead the retreat.

GTO had many members, each with extraordinary abilities.

Rowan's disguise skills were among the best in the organization. Quincy had always wanted to

compete with him but never had the chance.

Finally, she had the opportunity to meet him in person. She wanted to test him, but she was still

discovered.

And it was Ismene who discovered her first.

"Let's get down to business." Percival immediately got to the point.

Before they left, Vivienne and Percival drank a concoction Vivienne had made. It could alter their

voices.

Percival's voice now sounded exactly like Dorian's.

So Quincy didn't suspect a thing.

They took Quincy outside the store and found a place to sit down.

"We have a lead on the potion." Percival continued. "But Vivienne is suspicious. We need to move Dorian and Cordelia immediately, or we risk exposure."

Quincy listened with a half-doubting expression but didn't immediately respond. Instead, she asked,

"You said you have a lead on the potion. What have you found?"

Vivienne showed her a photo on her phone. "In the Brooks family's study, there's a custom safe. Scott never lets anyone in there alone, and he always locks the door at night."

"You mean the potion is in that safe?" Quincy was immediately interested.

Karen had left behind more than one vial of the potion, and she had a history with Scott. They even had a daughter, Vivienne, together.

GTO had always suspected that Scott had been dabbling with potions of some sort, but they just couldn't find concrete evidence yet.

"He seems to care a lot about that safe." Percival said while glancing at her. "Right now, our priority should be to get Dorian and Cordelia to safety."

Quincy nodded in agreement. "You're right; I'll inform the organization right away to arrange for backup."

"It's too late for that. Any communication now would mean blowing our cover." Vivienne stopped her just as she was about to dial. "My people are keeping an eye on Vivienne's every move. The quicker we act, the better. Any delay will just tip her off."

Quincy furrowed her brows. She was seemingly hesitant.

Vivienne nudged her again. "Once we've moved Dorian and Cordelia, we can immediately get to cracking Scott's safe and retrieve the potion."

That certainly piqued Quincy's interest.

Right now, everyone in GTO was running around for that potion. Whoever managed to get their hands on it first would be the hero of the day.

Quincy couldn't stand the thought of being a mere pawn. She was always in the shadows.

Since she had joined the organization, she was determined to make a big splash.

"Let's go! We move now!"