

## **Million-Dollar 361**

### Chapter 361

After Jerry and his crew had left, Scott's face was a storm cloud as he ascended the staircase and made his way to Vivienne's room.

He rapped on the door, and after a long wait, Vivienne eventually came to open it.

Leaning casually against the door frame, she arched an eyebrow, "You looking for me, Mr. Brooks?"

Scott locked eyes with her, his voice a shade deeper than usual, "Happy with the chaos you've caused?"

Vivienne let out a dry laugh, "Huh! Are you here to settle scores with me?"

Her tone was cool, edged with an unspoken authority.

Scott's brows knitted together. After a long stare, he softened, "Vivienne, I know you're upset about Calista coming back, but I have my reasons that I can't share. Dad's always loved you the most, and I hope you can understand that."

Vivienne's lips twisted into a mocking smile, "Mr. Brooks, are you mistaken? I've always been very understanding."

Her smile had a seductive twist, "I understand the difficulty you face so I agree with bringing Calista

back into the Brooks fold and I even went along with canceling the engagement. I've been nothing but accommodating. What more do you want from me, my heart on a platter?"

Scott's expression soured, "If you understand me, then why let your disciples create a scene at the Brooks estate? And why send Richard to hassle Grandpa at the nursing home? The Brooks family has weathered enough storms; I just want some peace."

Rubbing her temples and then crossing her arms, Vivienne looked at him with amusement, "Richard going after Baron was his own doing. My disciples? They can't stand to see me bullied. They were just looking out for me. Is that a problem?"

"Yes, it's understandable," Scott conceded, "but you should still try to calm them down."

Vivienne couldn't help but laugh, "Mr. Brooks, are you losing your cool?"

Scott's heart skipped and cast her a surprised look. Was she onto something?

He fell silent for a moment before asking, "What do you mean?"

With a sly smile, Vivienne probed, "Who do you think is more formidable, me or my mother?"

"You," Scott replied without hesitation.

Karen was the most unique woman he had ever encountered.

Her wisdom, her talents and all the gifts she received from the heavens seemed to halo her in an  
inextinguishable glow. She was always captivating.

But Vivienne was even more astonishing than her mother.

Vivienne's smile grew wilder. She straightened up and put hands in her pockets. And with a rogue's  
grin, she said, "Go prepare for Calista's reunion banquet, Scott. There will be a surprise waiting for  
you."

Frowning, Scott tried to speak, but Vivienne had already shut the door in his face.

He stood outside her door for a long while before turning and walking away.

On the other side, Calista was nearly out of her skin with fright at the explosion. Learning that it was  
Vivienne's disciples coming for revenge had her fuming.

Then she heard that Baron had returned in a rage and refused to acknowledge her engagement to  
Percival. She was so angry that she could have exploded right on site!

Why did Vivienne get to be so lucky?

Why her many disciples stood up for her, and even Baron seemed to be on her side?

Calista wanted to smash something in her anger, but she restrained herself, not wanting the Brooks' to

be disappointed in her. She huffed to herself with a long face.

They didn't agree with the engagement, so what?

Once the reunion banquet was over and everyone knew she was a Brooks, getting Percival would be a

piece of cake.

...

Two days later, it's time for Calista's reunion banquet.

She had been on her best behavior these last few days.

Scott and Judith had been running around making preparations for her banquet. With Baron holding

down the fort at the estate, no one dared to make trouble; everyone behaved perfectly.

The banquet, held at the Brooks estate, was far more lavish than Vivienne's simple hotel gathering.

The family had invited a bevy of A-list celebrities and high society's finest.

Mila, as Calista's mother, had been making frequent appearances at the estate and taking advantage

of the situation.

Although Judith had previously been opposed to Mila marrying Scott, she was, after all, Calista's mother. So her attitude had warmed significantly.

The banquet was set for the evening.

From the afternoon, the Brooks estate was abuzz with preparations to welcome the guests.

At seven o'clock, as dusk settled, Vivienne slipped into a black dress and leapt out her window, scaling the walls of the Brooks Mansion with ease.

With a few agile moves, she landed in Scott's room.

Moments later, another figure jumped in through the window.

Vivienne turned around with a smile, "Mr. Wolf, impeccable timing."

Percival returned the smile, "When Vivienne calls, how can I be anything but punctual?"

His gaze swept over Scott's room, "Thomas and Matthew are keeping Scott occupied; they won't be back up here for half an hour. Can you manage?"

"Half an hour is more than enough," Vivienne replied.

"Alright, let's split up and search!"

Without further conversation, they began a thorough search of Scott's room.

Vivienne had been here before. She had found a safe but not the item she was looking for.

This time she had brought Percival along for a more extensive search.

Barring any surprises, this would be her last search of Scott's personal space.

Vivienne and Percival were a blur of movement.

In just a few minutes, Percival announced, "Found a hidden compartment!"

Vivienne didn't budge, just looked up at him.

After a glance at the contents, she muttered, "Junk."

She nodded and resumed the search.

Together, they uncovered over a dozen secret nooks, all filled with trivialities.

Twenty minutes had slipped by, and Vivienne's expression grew stormy.

Suddenly, Percival called out, "Vivienne, get over here."

She was by his side in a heartbeat.

This was the ninth secret nook Percival had stumbled upon, housing a curious box with an unusual lock.

Vivienne frowned at Percival, "This lock's a tough nut to crack."

It was shaped like a crescent moon, not a common lock like a retinal scan or fingerprint.

Those high-tech locks were child's play for her and easy to bypass.

But this lock, crafted from some peculiar material, was uncharted territory for her.

Last time, it was only with Larry's toolkit that she'd managed to crack a similar puzzle.

This lock, clearly, wouldn't yield to any toolkit.

"Let's take it with us. I'll have someone work on it," Percival suggested. Neither of them was locksmiths

by trade, and time was too tight to fiddle with it now.

"If we take this thing, Scott will catch on in no time; we can't," Vivienne frowned.

Percival fell silent for a moment before saying, "Then we'll have to come back for it."

Just as Vivienne was about to agree, a flash of insight struck her. She paused, then quickly said, "Mr.

Wolf, hand me your pendant."

It seemed Percival had the same epiphany. Without hesitation, he removed his pendant and handed it to her.

Vivienne took off her own pendant, and together with Percival's, they formed a perfect crescent moon

key.

With a knowing look shared between them, they inserted the makeshift key into the lock.

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The lock clicked open, revealing its contents in the dim glow of the room. It was a stack of neatly

enveloped documents and a book.

Vivienne rifled through the papers until her eyes fell upon a particular envelope marked boldly:

[Paternity Test Results]!

[Test Subjects: Scott Brooks, Vivienne Hawthorn]

[Result: Positive Paternal Match]

Percival's heart skipped a beat as he read the results.

"A positive match?" He murmured, turning to Vivienne with a puzzled frown.

"What's going on? Didn't Vivienne say she was not Scott's daughter?" He thought.

He had investigated Vivienne's background only once initially, and it had come up empty. Thus,

everything he knew about her was only everything she wanted him to know. Back then, she told him

she was not Scott's daughter, and he had taken her at her word.



However, the paternity test showed that this was clearly not the case.

Vivienne sifted through the rest of the documents. There were ten in total, each one a paternity test from a different testing center, all with the same result. With a sly smile, she tucked the papers back into the envelope.

Turning to Percival, she explained, "I'm not his daughter. My mother had my genes altered. No matter which agency conducts the test, it'll always show a match."

Vivienne did not say more, but Percival understood her. There had to be a reason for Vivienne's mother to do this.

Without further ado, Vivienne directed Percival's attention to the book. It was not ancient, but it was worn, the kind that had been used often.

The book was actually a journal. Its pages were filled with handwriting added over time. However, the script within was foreign to Vivienne and Percival, not belonging to any known language or script they had ever encountered.

Glancing at the clock and noting the half-hour they had spent, Vivienne suggested, "Let's take photos and study this later."

Percival nodded, quickly capturing the mysterious text with his smartphone. They then carefully placed the box back and vanished from the room.

Downstairs, the Brooks Mansion was buzzing with guests. After emerging from Scott's room, Vivienne and Percival parted ways. Percival exited the mansion only to re-enter from the front, blending with the arriving guests.

Vivienne made her way to the dining area, where Kala spotted her first and waved her over. "Vivienne, come join us!"

At Kala's table sat Ronald, Carl, Ashley, and Darren. All the people Vivienne did not mind being around.

Thus, she paused for a moment, then headed toward them.

Kala pulled Vivienne to sit beside her and whispered, "After we finish eating, we plan to hit the shops downtown. Come with us."

Kala had only attended the event out of obligation to her family, to spare her parents any embarrassment. Now, she sought to ensure Vivienne would not feel uncomfortable staying at the party any longer than necessary. Thus, she made plans with Carl and the others to go shopping after dinner.

Vivienne appreciated Kala's kindness and offered with a smile. "Maybe... I'll treat you all to a meal later!"

"Huh?" Confused, Kala glanced at the spread before her. There were over a dozen appetizers, with more courses to come. Surely, they would be full by then, right?

But Vivienne just grinned, keeping her plans to herself.

Meanwhile, Calista stood beside Judith in a lavish designer dress, her poise a mask for her growing impatience. She had insisted on greeting the guests, especially to catch Percival's eye the moment he arrived. Yet, he was nowhere to be seen, and the flattery of insincere guests was wearing her thin.

Just as she was about to excuse herself, she caught sight of Percival stepping out of a car with Richard.

Percival, in his black suit, exuded an air of sophistication and aloofness that pulled at Calista's heartstrings.

She quickly adjusted her expression and approached Percival with a dignified smile. "Mr. Ellington, you..."

But before she could finish, Percival strode past her without a glance, his indifference cutting her

deeper than any word could.

Frozen in place, Calista watched as Richard gave her a dismissive look and muttered, "Hideous!"

Richard had never planned to attend the gathering, but his pride would not allow him to miss it after the

Brooks family had caused his granddaughter-in-law such grief. If Vivienne was not happy, neither was

he. And when he was unhappy, he was going to stir the pot. He was here to make a scene.

Calista's face turned a shade of stormy blue. One man ignored her, and the other openly insulted her.

She was the Brooks family's golden girl, yet she received no respect.

As the crowd's curious eyes fell upon her, Calista clenched her fists and forced a smile, her thoughts

seething with indignation. They may not see her worth now, but she was determined to make Percival

need her one day.

Upon entering the party, Richard immediately sought out Vivienne. Spotting her, he made his way over

and declared, "Vivienne, come sit with your grandpa!"

Percival glanced over at Vivienne, who was mingling with some guests a short distance away. Instead

of joining her, he made his way to the Sterling family's table and took a seat.

The moment Leopold spotted him, he nearly jumped out of his skin and instinctively shuffled behind his dad for cover.

With a lift of his eyebrows and a crooked smile, Percival spoke in a soft, teasing tone, "Leopold, have a few days apart made me a stranger? Come on, sit by me."

Leopold's skin crawled, and he chuckled awkwardly. "Ahem! I'm, uh, quite comfortable here, thanks...

You enjoy your meal, okay? All good!"

Percival's gaze lingered on Leopold, the smile playing at his lips growing wider.

Leopold felt like prey under the gaze of a hungry wolf, his heart pounding rapidly in his chest!

As the last of the guests arrived, Calista's family reunion feast officially began.

Baron was nowhere to be seen, so Scott took the stage to speak.

"Today, we celebrate my daughter Calista's family reunion feast..."

He had barely started when a commotion at the gate drew everyone's attention.

A group of heavily armed individuals barged in, surrounding the Brooks family in no time. The guests were visibly shaken.

All this for a family reunion feast? Since when did it require such a show of force?

Scott's eyes narrowed, and just as he was about to speak up, about a dozen people made a beeline for Calista.

"Calista Pendleton?" The leader's voice boomed with authority, his presence alone commanding and intimidating.

Startled, Calista stammered, "I...I am Calista, what's the problem?"

She had never seen such a spectacle and was instantly petrified.

"You are under suspicion of using infants for virus research, attempting to release a virus in Veridia, and endangering national security. By the orders of our superiors, you are hereby under arrest!"

The leader showed the warrant for Calista's arrest.

As the command was given, the armed group took control of Calista.

She was led outside before she could even process what was happening. When she finally snapped back to reality, panic took over, "Virus research? There must be some mistake! It's not me. I did not do anything!"

Today was supposed to be about her family reunion, and it hadn't even properly started. How could it

end like this?

No!

This was not the outcome she had envisioned!

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The unfolding drama gobsmacked the guests at the gathering.

Everyone's mind was plastered with a big question mark.

What? What just happened?

Was not this supposed to be a family reunion feast?

Why was the guest of honor being carted off by the police?

Accused of endangering national security, no less?

The Brooks family was equally stunned, caught completely off-guard by these developments. At the

center of it all, Scott's expression turned as dark as a thundercloud.

His gaze cut through the room to land on Vivienne, and a flicker of ice shot through his eyes.

So, this was the "surprise" she had talked about?

What on earth was she playing at?

Calista, about to be dragged out of the Brooks Mansion, struggled frantically. "Let me go! You've got

the wrong person! I'm innocent! Mom! Save me! I did not do it!"

But what could her slight frame do against the iron grip of the Vanguard Agency?

Each member of the Vanguard Agency was the cream of the crop.

Even the toughest guys from the GTO would not stand a chance once the Vanguard Agency had them

in their grasp, let alone Calista.

"Calista!" Mila snapped out of her shock and rushed to intercept the Vanguard Agency members.

However, before she could get close, they pointed their guns at her. "Those who obstruct justice will be

taken away, too!"

Mila froze in her tracks, startled.

Under the astonished gazes of the crowd, Calista was taken away just like that.

The guests exchanged uneasy glances before excusing themselves one by one.

In no time, the Brooks Mansion was left with just the Brooks family and their close associates Richard,

Percival, and Leopold.

The Brooks were still reeling from the turn of events.



Who could have anticipated a family reunion turning into this?

Tomorrow's headlines were going to explode! The Brooks family would be thrust into the spotlight once again.

With a cool detachment, Vivienne scanned the room and stood up. She patted Kala's shoulder. "Let's go. Dinner is on me."

"Huh?" Kala blinked in confusion.

How could Vivienne even think about food at a time like this?

Then it hit her. Why would she not be in the mood to eat?

Calista had been taken away, and it felt darn satisfying!

Thus, Kala stood up energetically and said to the others, "Seems we won't be dining in tonight. Let's hit the town!"

With the commotion, no one had touched the banquet food, and the household staff would handle the cleanup.

The younger generation would only be underfoot here.

Darren had never been fond of Calista, and his focus was all on Vivienne. He was anxious about her

temper and worried she might teach him a lesson for what happened years ago. But seeing her in quite

a good mood, he trotted after her eagerly.

Carl did not waste a moment following suit.

After a brief silence, Ronald and Ashley stood up to join them.

Leopold had been itching to leave since Calista was apprehended but was wary of Percival's looming

presence. Now, with Vivienne departing, he hurried after her. "Wait for me, Vivienne! I'm coming too!"

He sprinted off, not looking back.

Percival barely glanced at the Brooks family before leaving with Richard. He instructed Thomas to

escort Richard home while swiftly pulling Vivienne into his car.

Kala blurted out, "You heartless jerk..."

Percival's eyes flicked up. "Follow my car."

With that, he drove off with Vivienne, leaving the others in disarray.

What was going on?

Were these two not supposed to have called off their engagement?

Yet, they seemed as close as ever.

Seeing Percival's car disappearing into the distance, the group hurried to catch up.

The dining destination was Charisma Pavilion, a high-end, exclusive members-only restaurant with sky-

high prices that even the Brooks' heirs could not afford to frequent regularly.

However, the food was undeniably delectable.

Upon arriving at the top-floor private room, everyone's eyes widened.

Darren gasped. "Holy smokes! This is the Supreme VIP suite!"

Ashley added in a dull tone, "I heard this room is never open to the public, only to Supreme VIP card

owners. And there are only three such cards in existence!"

All eyes turned to Percival.

This guy was no wastrel of the Ellington family. He was a hidden gem!

They followed Percival in, only to be met by the manager of Charisma Pavilion. "Percival! You've

arrived?"

The manager never personally attended to guests; that was a job for his assistants. Yet, here he was,

addressing Percival by his first name.

What was going on?

"Yes." Percival leaned back in his chair, one hand entwined with Vivienne's, the other resting on the table. His voice was cool and detached. "These are my friends. Take good care of them."

"Of course, Percival!" After the manager gave his orders, he left.

Silence enveloped the room.

Kala and the others glanced back and forth between Vivienne and Percival, a hundred unasked questions hanging in the air.

Percival looked unapproachable, exuding an intimidating aura that silenced any potential queries.

Ashley risked a glance at Percival, heart pounding, before quickly averting her gaze.

Soon, the food arrived.

Charisma Pavilion's signature dishes had everyone salivating.

Percival deftly poured wine for his guests, then raised his glass with aristocratic grace. "I'd like to extend my deepest gratitude for the kindness you've all shown to dear Vivienne. A toast to you all!"

The Brooks family scrambled to lift their glasses and clink them against Percival's in a chorus of tinkles.

After the drinks were sipped, the younger Brooks exchanged puzzled glances.

What was with this sudden change?

They had interacted with Percival before without a shred of tension, but today, they felt as jittery as a bunch of mice in a cat's presence.

Finally, unable to resist the tantalizing spread of food before them and too hungry to ponder further, they all began to eat voraciously. They had been running on empty since breakfast, after all.

Percival, ever the gentleman, served Vivienne a helping of food with a tender voice, "Vivienne, eat your fill."

Vivienne shot him a playful smile. "And if I get fat, will you take responsibility?"

His eyes twinkled with mirth. "Of course, I'll take care of you!"

"That's a deal, Mr. Wolf. But first, I want my 100 billion dollars back," Vivienne extended her hand, her eyes curving into crescents.

Percival was momentarily speechless. Since when did one return a gift?

But then, firmly...

"No returns!" He said sternly.

Vivienne's face fell.

Where was his chivalry now?

With a slight cough to mask his embarrassment, Percival offered a compromise. "The team's been a bit short on funds lately. Consider it a loan. I'll give you back 120 billion in a month."

Vivienne's eyes sparkled. "Now that's an offer I can't refuse."

A net profit of 20 billion dollars!

The Brooks family members were dumbfounded once again.

Were these two just having a laugh at their expense?

Just then, Percival nonchalantly served a portion onto Leopold's plate with a deeper smile. "Leopold, you must try this pork steak. It's exquisite!"

Leopold froze.

Oh, no!

Was he being sized up for the slaughter?

Suddenly, he felt a chill run down his spine and dropped to his knees with a thud. "Percival, I beg your

forgiveness!"

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The Brooks family stared in disbelief yet again.

"What on earth is going on now?

Come on! Can't a guy enjoy a meal in peace?

This is really going to drive me nuts!" They all thought.

With a smirk spreading across his face, Percival forked another piece of steak onto his plate and

teased, "What are you doing? Don't make it look like I'm bullying you. I'm a gentle soul."

Leopold was speechless.

Gross!

Bullshit!

Percival tilted his head and looked at Vivienne. "Vivienne, I'm gentle, right?"

"Yeah." Vivienne nodded earnestly, "My Mr. Wolf here is the gentlest gentleman on earth."

Leopold was utterly at a loss for words.

Percival's smile deepened, and he whispered to Leopold, "Come on! Eat up so we can head to Fariana

Isle soon!"

Leopold, nearly in tears, pleaded, "No, please! Percival! Have mercy, I won't ever think about cutting ties with you again!"

"This is just bloody brilliant! I can't sass my disciples! And I can't mess with Percival! Who will save me?" He yelled in his mind.

"Alright!" Percival was still grinning as he said, "I have a gift for you."

Leopold suddenly had a bad feeling.

Just then, a furious shout came from outside the private dining room, "Leopold! Get your ass out here!"

Leopold sprang up, his mind a whirlwind, "Damn! Percival, that's cold!"

His doomsday had arrived!

As he attempted to make a run for it, the door was kicked open.

Everyone turned to see a girl in a black leather outfit, her hair cascading over her shoulders, stride in.

She headed straight for Leopold.

Leopold shivered and dashed away.

However, after just two steps, the girl leaped forward, blocking his path, and grabbed his shirt.



"Running away? You sleep with me, ditch me, and now you dare to hide?"

The crowd cast odd looks at Leopold.

Feeling the heat on his face, Leopold shoved her away, exasperated, "Griffin Martinez, cut the crap,

when did I ever sleep with you?"

"I don't care. You're not getting away! Even if I have to break your legs, you're coming with me to the

courthouse today!" Griffin stood with her hands on her hips, fuming.

"I wouldn't marry you if you were the last woman on earth!" Leopold blurted out and bolted.

Griffin lunged after him, sweeping her leg in an attempt to trip him.

Leopold dodged and took off.

Griffin would not let him get away, kicking him square in the back.

"Ow, hey!" Leopold stumbled and fell, yelling, "Are you serious?"

If it were not for the fact she was a woman, he would have fought back!

Griffin straddled him and grabbed his hair. "You're the first to sleep with me and not take responsibility.

Let me tell you, you're not getting away unless I'm six feet under!"

She choked Leopold with her arm. "I'll ask you one more time. Are you coming with me to the

courthouse or not?"

"No way!" Leopold was furious.

This crazy woman! Spouting nonsense!

He had been avoiding her at all costs. Why would he sleep with her?

She was like some fierce warrior. Who in their right mind would marry her?

Only if he were the last man on earth!

"Fine!" Griffin's rage turned into a sinister smile, "Then I'll break your legs, and you'll spend your life in

bed. Let's see how you'll run then!"

She got up, grabbed a chair nearby, and hurled it at Leopold.

Leopold, still aching from the kick, could not move in time.

Just as the chair was about to hit him, Vivienne leaped in. Grabbing Griffin's wrist, her face

expressionless as he said, "Lay a finger on my people without asking me first?"

Griffin looked up at Vivienne, taken aback by her beauty.

Suddenly, she remembered something and glared at Leopold, teeth gritted, "So, Leopold, that's why

you've been avoiding me like the plague. You hooked up with this little temptress? You plan to dump me for her? Dream on!"

Vivienne was speechless.

She glanced at Percival and said slowly, "Mr. Wolf, temptress, that's a compliment, right?"

"Ahem!" Percival coughed lightly, struggling to maintain his composure. "Yes, it's a compliment!"

Vivienne did not know what to say.

"Mr. Wolf, you've gone rogue!" She thought.

Seeing Griffin's misunderstanding, Leopold panicked, "What nonsense are you spouting? She's

Vivienne!"

"Vivienne?"

Griffin paused, then her anger switched to groveling as she clung to Vivienne's legs, tears on

command. "Vivienne, you've got to help me! This heartbreaker, he slept with me and kicked me to the

curb. I'm ruined. I can't show my face anywhere!"

Vivienne, Percival, and the rest of the Brooks family were all speechless.

Was Griffin an actress?

Vivienne, thrown off by Griffin's antics, coughed awkwardly. "Ahem, get up, please!"

"No!" Griffin clung tighter to her pant leg, "You have to stand up for me. You don't understand my

suffering. I've been chasing him for fifteen years, and he's been dodging me, refusing to take

responsibility. I've tried being nice, I've tried being tough, but he won't budge!

All I want is for him to give me a title. I'm 23, and my family is pressuring me to get married. No one will

have me now that everyone knows about him and me. I'm desperate."

Vivienne's gaze hardened.

Everyone looked at Leopold as if he were a complete deviant.

Griffin was 23, so if she started her quest to find Leopold 15 years ago, it meant that when she was

barely 8, he had already...

The bastard!

Leopold's eyes bulged in disbelief, unable to fathom how anyone could so blatantly twist the truth.

Was this creature even human?

As he stood dumbfounded, Vivienne gently patted Griffin's shoulder, her voice as soft as silk. "Don't

you worry, I'll handle this. We don't harbor such vile creatures in the Emerald Monastery!"

With that, she strode over to Leopold.

Before he could even react, there was a sickening crack as Vivienne broke his arms and legs like they were nothing.

A delayed wave of agony hit Leopold, and he screamed, "Ahhh!!"

The members of the Brooks family exchanged looks.

Holy smokes!

Was their little cousin this badass?

Just listening to that sound made them wince in sympathy!

Note to self: keep away from her in the future, far away!

Leopold lay on the ground, alternating between howling in pain and shooting venomous glares at

Griffin. "You wicked witch, are you happy now? When did I ever lay a finger on you? Is it my fault we

kissed as kids? A kiss! Does that warrant death or something?"

"Explain yourself to Vivienne now!" Leopold wanted nothing more than to give Griffin a good thrashing.

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Everyone was slack-jawed with amazement.

Just a kiss?

Was it really necessary to chase after Leopold for 15 years just because of a peck on the lips?

This woman was really something!

"Explain, my foot! My BFF told me a kiss is as good as hitting the hay, and you even held me close, swearing you'd marry me when we grew up! Are you even a man? Can't remember your promises?"

Griffin fumed, her anger mounting by the second.

That was her first kiss.

And she had held onto it for 23 years, waiting for Leopold to step up and take responsibility.

But this guy!

He was flat-out denying it!

Leopold was hopping mad, "Which of your BFFs said that? Bring her here. I'll give her a piece of my mind! Responsible for a kiss? If that's the case, considering the number of women I've kissed, should I marry them all?"

"Ptooeey! Have I lost my mind? Why did I say 'the number of women I've kissed'? I've only ever kissed

Griffin!" He thought.

And it was that very kiss that had sparked a decade and a half of pursuit, leaving him so terrified that

he dared not even think of romance.

"You dared to kiss someone else?" Griffin's face turned a shade of jealous green.

Leopold opened his mouth to explain, but Griffin turned her back, clinging to Vivienne's legs and

wailing, "Vivienne, look at this scoundrel! Not only does he refuse to take responsibility for me, but he's

also messing around with other women. My life is so miserable, truly unbearable."

Vivienne rubbed her temples as Griffin's ranting gave her a headache.

She grabbed Leopold, swiftly healed his previously dislocated arm amid his cries of surprise, and then

shoved him toward Griffin.

"Go and get hitched!" Vivienne said dismissively, her eyes rolling with contempt.

Leopold looked pitiful, on the verge of tears. "Vivienne, it really isn't how she's making it out to be."

"Oh?" Vivienne's gaze sharpened, "So you think you don't have to take responsibility after kissing

someone?"

She had never been in a relationship either.

Only Percival had ever kissed her.

So, in her dictionary, a kiss meant responsibility.

And if they slept together, the responsibility would be even greater!

Griffin nodded vigorously. "Exactly, you've got to take responsibility after a kiss."

"Vivienne is so reasonable! A real problem solver!" She thanked Vivienne in her mind.

Leopold was at a loss for words.

"I'm so wronged! If only I had known it would come to this, I would have never kissed her!" He thought.

However, he seemed to forget that he was only ten at the time, and Griffin was a cute seven-year-old,

like a porcelain doll, and he just could not resist kissing her.

After the kiss, he had earnestly promised, "Don't worry, I'll marry you when we grow up!"

Leopold turned to seek support from Percival, but then he remembered that this whole situation was

Percival's doing. Thus, there was no way he would speak up for him.

He sighed. "Vivienne, can we handle this by ourselves? Marriage isn't child's play; it's supposed to last

a lifetime. We can't just rush into it because of something that happened when we were kids, can we?"



After speaking, Leopold turned to Griffin. "Shall we step outside to talk? I promise I won't run away this time."

Griffin pondered for a moment, then agreed, "Fine!"

She did not want her future marriage to Leopold to be plagued with hostility. If they could have a decent conversation, that would be best!

Seeing that Griffin had no objections, neither did Vivienne. She said, "Sort it out yourselves!"

With that, her gaze darkened as she turned to Leopold. "Don't make me settle this."

A chill ran down Leopold's spine at her icy tone. He nodded meekly. "Understood, Vivienne. I'll handle it."

Then, he hurriedly whisked Griffin away.

Vivienne watched them leave, then settled back in her chair. "Let's continue with our meal."

"Sure."

The atmosphere in the room was still recovering from Griffin's outburst, eerily quiet.

Vivienne's eyes fell on Percival, her eyebrows lifting. "Mr. Wolf, that was quite the surprise you arranged for Leopold."

Percival's lips curled slightly. "Breaking ties with me is not that easy."

Vivienne did not know what to say.

Suddenly, she felt a twinge of sympathy for Leopold!

Ten minutes later, Leopold returned to the dining area alone.

Vivienne glanced up, noting that Griffin had already left.

The fact that Griffin left so peacefully was a surprise.

Vivienne raised an eyebrow. "All sorted?"

Leopold chuckled awkwardly. "I just told that crazy... I told Griffin that my father has to agree to it first,

and he definitely won't."

"Why wouldn't he agree?" Vivienne was genuinely curious.

In the ten minutes Leopold had been gone, she had learned about Griffin's family background from

Percival and the Brooks siblings.

Griffin was the darling daughter of the Martinez family of Rivenwood.

Unlike the Four Prominent Families of Rivenwood, such as the Ellington and Sterling families, the

Martinez family did not participate in Rivenwood's pecking order. Yet, their influence was vast.

The Martinez family belonged to an ancient warrior lineage.

Many families had withdrawn from society centuries ago, with solid foundations and wide-reaching power. Each of these families had their own secrets passed down from ancient times. They practiced fighting arts, but their techniques were unlike ordinary fighting arts, with very high lethality.

However, little was known about the ancient warrior lineages because their members rarely ventured out and had never clashed with Rivenwood's prominent families. So, most people only knew superficial details about them.

The Martinez family was the only member of the ancient warrior lineage to re-emerge after seclusion.

It was an enigma in Rivenwood, a town where lineage and prestige were as good as currency. They marched to the beat of their own drum, and as a result, they were somewhat ostracized by the other illustrious families that made up the town's elite.

Rumor had it that the Martinez's were government operatives, working on assignments so secretive that whispers of their activities were met with nothing more than a knowing shrug. What exactly they did was anyone's guess, but it was clear they were involved in matters best kept out of the public eye.

Griffin Martinez, in particular, was a name that resonated a bit more loudly in the local circles. She was a tech mogul, a veritable titan who had carved a niche for herself in the realm of cutting-edge warfare technology. Her repertoire ranged from state-of-the-art combat drones to advanced weaponry.

The nation gobbled up every piece of her research with an insatiable appetite. To put it simply, Griffin was a force to be reckoned with.

Leopold let out a heavy sigh. "The Martinez family hails from an ancient warrior lineage," He explained.

"You've spent years at the Emerald Monastery, Vivienne, so you might not be aware, but there's a deep-rooted aversion to warrior lineages among Rivenwood's affluent families."

Although Vivienne had her own ventures and achievements, she admittedly knew little about the ancient warriors or the intricate dynamics of Rivenwood's high society.

Leopold's words piqued her interest.

"How so?" She asked.

"I'm not entirely sure of the details," Leopold admitted. "My father mentioned it once. It's something about a family that accidentally crossed the ancient warriors and ended up being wiped out. Not just

killed, but erased. Over twenty people vanished without a trace. Everyone suspects it was the work of a warrior lineage, but there's no proof."

In this day and age, outright murder was a faux pas that could tarnish even the most powerful of families. However, for those from the ancient warrior lineage, it seemed they could eliminate someone with such finesse that no evidence would ever surface.

#### Chapter 366

Deep in the heart of the wilderness, where legends of old feuds and battles were as common as the mist clung to the mountains, a lineage of warriors existed so ancient that their origins were lost to time.

The locals, simple folk who preferred their peace and quiet, rarely spoke of these warrior families. It was not out of disdain but fear—fear that a wrong word might lead to a fate so dire not even their remains would be found.

Vivienne, propping her chin with her hand, pondered for a moment before asking, "If you folks stay clear of those ancient warrior lineages, what's the deal with you and Griffin?"

"Don't get me started on Griffin," Leopold grumbled, his face twisted in displeasure. "She's a classmate of my cousin. The Martinez family must've known about the Rivenwood families shunning their kind, so they tucked her away in a relative's home, keeping her true identity under wraps. Nobody knew she

was a Martinez, a true blue blood of the ancient warrior lineage until she was 14 when she patented some kind of combat aircraft design."

Vivienne's eyes lit up. This woman was a talent!

Seeing Vivienne's reaction, Leopold sank deeper into his funk and muttered, "Vivienne, could you please just let it be? I can handle my own messes."

Vivienne arched an eyebrow, "Sure!"

But Leopold clearly lacked self-awareness.

A genius like Griffin, a girl who lived with such raw passion—how could she ever let go?

Relieved by Vivienne's promise, Leopold exhaled deeply, only to feel the icy gaze of death upon him.

He stiffened.

In the midst of dealing with that woman, he had forgotten about Percival.

"Erm, Percival, please, put today's bill on me and ask for anything you need," Leopold offered, bowing and scraping, internally cursing his luck.

How on earth was he supposed to appease Percival now?

Desperation crept into his thoughts.

Percival's lips curled into a gentle smile, veiling a lethal edge, "Mr. Sterling, how could I possibly impose on you?"

Leopold was speechless.

"I'm begging you, just stop talking." He thought but dared not say a word.

...

At the Vanguard Agency.

Calista was dragged into this place without a chance to object and thrown into a dark, claustrophobic room.

It was empty, and she dared not make a move.

The darkness amplified every fear, and the slightest noise could make her flinch.

Bang!

Startled by her own movements, she fell to the floor. Just then, the lights flickered on, making her yelp in alarm.

Once she calmed down, Calista tried to make sense of her capture. They accused her of using infants

for viral research.

It was preposterous! She was innocent.

What was going on?

Her body stuck to the wall, filled with anxiety, as if she was waiting for her inevitable death.

No!

She had to leave! She could not be locked up here!

“Hello? Anyone? You guys got the wrong person! I didn’t use infants for viral research like you said I

did. Let me out! I’m from the TIC Research Institute. I can bring you to my lab if you don't know what

that is. You absolutely won’t find any traces of virus research in there. Someone!”

However, her protests went unheard, her cries muffled by the soundproof walls.

The most eerie part was this place was strangely quiet. It was so quiet that Calista could hear her own

breathing. The unknown was the most terrifying, and the slightest sound struck her nerves, keeping her

alert.

Hours passed, her voice grew hoarse, and fatigue set in. She was about to succumb to sleep when the



door creaked open.

"You're free to go," A man's icy voice announced before Calista could speak.

"What?" She was dumbfounded.

Then, she was ushered out and into a car, no questions allowed. The men with guns had stern faces, and she dared not speak.

Everything was extremely strange. She was captured out of the blue and was now allowed to leave.

Did this mean that she would be fine?

Why did these people not investigate the matter clearly beforehand, then?

...

At the Brooks Mansion.

The headlines erupted online following the scandalous family reunion banquet events.

[The Brooks Heiress Arrested!]

[Vanguard Agency Involved in Brooks Family Crime!]

[Brooks Heiress Faces Death Sentence!]

Despite Baron's efforts to suppress the news, it spread like wildfire, stirring a frenzy in elite circles.

The Brooks family was a picture of dismay, but none more so than Baron.

Richard had called him and laughed at him for three hours. Even after hanging up and blocking his number, he kept calling him. Thanks to that, Baron had not slept a wink.

"Now, are you satisfied?" Baron seethed, his anger palpable as he faced his family, who shared his discomfort and frustration.

The Brooks family was undoubtedly feeling the heat, having thrown three family reunions in quick succession, but it turned out to be a recipe for ridicule rather than celebration.

"Just yesterday, the people who captured Calista said she was tinkering with some virus? She's got some nerve, huh? Who dares to mess with that kind of stuff?" Kala had not caught the whole story, just snippets about a virus.

She was shocked, to say the least.

"I knew she was into her research, but I never imagined..." Judith's face had lost its color. "This could tarnish the Brooks family name. Maybe we should figure out a way to bail her out?"

Judith seemed to be putting the family's best interests at heart.

Vivienne sat silently, her delicate fingers rhythmically tapping on the table.

"Grandma, do you even know what messing with viruses means? That's dangerous business!" Kala

was getting worked up. She did not want to live under the same roof as someone who played with viruses.

Who knows, she might end up in a coffin without even realizing it.

Kala was so irritated she could not hold back. "I've said it before, we shouldn't have let that illegitimate daughter come back. She was nothing but trouble, but no one listened. Now look where we are! She's dragged us all down!"

The more Kala spoke, the louder she got, "Playing with viruses, at best, she gets slapped with a serious sentence. At worst, our entire Brooks family gets dragged through the mud!"

The villa was silent as a grave. Nobody spoke because they knew Kala was spot on.

This was not something to be understated.

Being taken by the Vanguard Agency was no minor deal.

Such a serious crime, the Brooks family might not withstand the storm!

Suddenly, the sound of a door creaking open shattered the silence, followed by a voice, "Grandpa,

Grandma, Dad, I'm back."

Everyone's gaze snapped to the entrance, where they saw Calista standing in the doorway.

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The room fell into a stunned silence.

How on earth was she back?

Was not she apprehended?

Vivienne glanced at Calista, her eyebrows lifting ever so slightly, a flash of imperceptible light crossing her gaze.

Calista stood at the door, eyes sweeping over the assembled crowd before resting on Vivienne, who seated in the corner. She marched over, her eyes locked with Vivienne's, her teeth clenched as she demanded, "Was it you?"

After a moment's contemplation, she was sure this mess had nothing to do with her. Among everyone in the Brooks family, Vivienne had been more at odds with her than anyone else.

With a languid ease, Vivienne reclined in her chair, her hands resting on the armrests, gazing coolly at Calista.

Seeing her nonchalance, Calista grew even more infuriated. Her delicate face almost twisted in anger, yet she struggled to maintain her composure. "I know you're not thrilled about me becoming your sister, but last night was the Brooks family's feast! Your actions could put the entire Brooks family in the hot seat. Did not you think about the consequences for our family?"

Her tone held the certainty that Vivienne was the culprit.

Watching the exchange, Judith frowned and interjected, "What's going on here? Calista, how did you come back? And what's this about Vivienne being behind it?"

The capabilities of the Vanguard Agency were no secret to anyone in the room.

No one could walk out of there once taken.

"Grandma, they cleared me. I did not do it. But why would they come for me at the Brooks Mansion?

Someone must have been pulling strings," Calista hinted with purpose.

All eyes shifted to Vivienne.

The infant virus trials were no minor affair. If Calista were to shoulder such an accusation, it would ruin her life.

Calista believed Vivienne reported her to keep her away from Percival. She refused to believe Vivienne

had the power to command the Vanguard Agency.

It had to be a tip-off!

Judith turned her steely gaze to Vivienne, asking, "Is this true, Vivienne?"

The rest of the Brooks family awaited Vivienne's response. This was no trivial matter. One mishandling could destroy the Brooks family's reputation.

Vivienne was one of their own, and they could not fathom her doing such a thing!

Only Scott looked on with a penetrating stare as if trying to see right through her.

But there she sat, unfazed, her expression unchanging even under the scrutinizing eyes of her family.

"No," Vivienne said as she rose from her chair, her voice detached.

In truth, she was indeed the one responsible. She had almost confirmed what she needed to know.

Sending Calista to the Vanguard Agency was just to verify something.

But what was unexpected was Calista's return.

The order to apprehend Calista had come directly from Percival. His men took Calista, with strict orders that no one was to contact Calista.

And now, Calista had returned.

Vivienne's eyes flashed coldly as she met Calista's gaze, sending a shiver down her spine.

Calista felt a momentary cowardice. Remembering the terrifying small room and the humiliation of

being taken away in front of so many people, she felt an acute sense of dread.

"How could it not be you? You're the only one who wouldn't want me back in the Brooks family.

Vivienne, I know you hate me, but you can't let our entire family be shamed. Can't we let bygones be

bygones?" Calista tried to play on the family sentiment, stirring the emotions of the other Brooks family

members.

Scott stepped forward, his tone firm as he said, "Vivienne, if it was you, apologize to your sister."

His voice was commanding yet probing.

Vivienne's eyes twinkled, and she suddenly laughed, "Are you kidding, Mr. Brooks?"

Apologize?

What a joke!

Kala frowned upon hearing Scott's words.

Vivienne had already denied any involvement, and yet Scott was demanding an apology based solely

on Calista's word.

Was Karen not the love of his life?

Was Vivienne not his favorite child?

Why was it that now that Calista was back, everything changed?

Kala felt as if he did not know Scott anymore.

Seeing that the other elders also agreed with Scott, Kala hurriedly said, "Uncle, Vivienne said this has

nothing to do with her. Plus, these people didn't say she did it either, did they? You can't just make

Vivienne apologize based solely on Calista's words. This is not fair to her. They're both your

daughters."

Scott's icy gaze flickered toward Kala, silencing her with a chilling stare.

Ignoring Kala, Scott turned back to Vivienne, his expression unreadable.

Whether Vivienne was truly his daughter was still up for debate. Even though the multiple paternity

tests confirmed their relation, he had his doubts.

Even if she was his flesh and blood, her heart was cold, much like Karen's.



He knew deep down that Vivienne was involved, but whenever he faced her clear, piercing eyes, he felt his throat clenched, leaving him speechless.

Look at her!

Vivienne was even more formidable than Karen! She could unsettle one's mind with just a look and a mysterious smile.

Under the weight of her light words, he was rendered utterly mute.

Vivienne's lips curled into a lazy smirk. "Mr. Brooks, do I still owe an apology here?"

Scott found himself at a loss for words, utterly unsure how to respond.

Kala did not hesitate to stand by Vivienne, clapping her on the shoulder in solidarity. "No apologies necessary. You did not do anything wrong. Why should you say sorry?"

"Exactly. If anyone's stirring the pot, it's Calista. She must've done something to get herself noticed, and that's why she was taken. Vivienne, I've got your back!" Carl declared, raising his hands in a gesture of trust, firmly aligning himself with Vivienne.

Looking at these people standing by Vivienne's side, Calista's heart burned with indignation.

Why, just why?

Vivienne had duped Carl before, yet there he stood, resolutely by her side. What kind of spell had

Vivienne cast on them?

In the midst of the tension, Judith stepped forward to smooth things over. "Enough, we're all family

here. We should get along. Let's put this matter to rest and not hold any grudges."

After saying her piece, she took Calista by the hand, smiling reassuringly. "Calista, dear, make yourself

at home with the Brooks family. Tell me if you need anything, and I'll be there for you."

"Thank you, Grandma."

But Calista was far from ready to let Vivienne off the hook. Approaching her, she said with a forced

benevolence, "Vivienne, if you don't want to apologize, that's fine. Grandma says we're family, after all.

I forgive you. Let's try to get along from now on."

"Stay away from me," Vivienne replied, her eyes brimming with distaste.

Judith's expression soured. "Vivienne, Calista is now the second eldest young lady of this house, your

elder sister. How can you speak to her like that?"

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Vivienne cast a derisive glance at Judith, a sneer etching the corners of her lips. "Judith, do I need to

remind you that my mom has only one daughter?"

Judith's face turned a shade of ashen fury.

That was why her attitude towards Vivienne had turned frosty since she learned that Calista was

Scott's daughter.

Vivienne was the proverbial ungrateful brat. No matter how kind they were to her, how much they

poured out their hearts, she always took their kindness for granted, mistaking their genuine concern for

meddling interference!

She always acted like she did not give a hoot about the Brooks family.

At first, Judith tolerated Vivienne's insolence because she owed her life to her. But now...

Scott was not only Calista's father!

Since Vivienne did not cherish their goodwill, then it was time to lavish all their affection on Calista.

Vivienne gave Judith a sidelong glance, her gaze finally settling on Calista. With a tone of indifference,

she said, "Don't call me family anymore. You don't deserve it."

With those words, Vivienne turned on her heel, ready to leave.

Calista, teeth clenched as if nursing a deep grievance, called out, "Vivienne, if you keep this up, the

Brooks family won't be able to put up with you anymore."

"Oh, really?" Vivienne's gaze flicked to Scott. "Mr. Brooks, are you going to throw me out?"

Scott fell silent for a moment before saying, "I won't throw you out."

Vivienne's lips curled into a faint smile, and without another word to them, she entered her room.

Once in her room, she pulled out her phone and made a call.

"Vivienne." The voice on the other end greeted, laced with a hint of warmth.

Vivienne poured herself a glass of water, took a sip, and then said, "Calista's been brought back."

There was a brief pause on the line before Percival responded in his typically measured tone, "It seems someone has grown impatient."

"The virus lab of Mr. B hasn't been found yet," Vivienne stated coldly.

"There haven't been any new reports of missing infants recently. Their experiments must not have started. Don't worry. I will do everything in my power to save those children." Percival assured her, his voice tinged with gentleness.

Vivienne nodded, "Good, I'll leave Vanguard Agency to you. I'll find the people."

"Will do."

In the Brooks Mansion's grand hall, Scott looked at Calista, well aware of the humiliation she had endured. He swiftly suggested, "Since yesterday was a misunderstanding, let's throw you another welcoming party."

"Thank you, Dad."

Calista had been waiting to bring up the subject, but Scott spoke first. Naturally, she accepted, seizing the opportunity to clear up the misunderstanding from the previous day.

As long as she could restore her reputation, Calista still had a chance with Percival.

What did it matter if it was all an act?

They were currently in a broken engagement.

The Brooks family urgently needed this event to vindicate Calista's honor. Considering that the decorations from the previous night had not been completely taken down, they simply made some adjustments and sent out invitations for the elite to attend Calista's belated reunion feast.

The socialites were all too aware of yesterday's fiasco and were curious about another reunion party so soon.

Judith had clarified that the entire Brooks family must attend Calista's party, but Kala was far from pleased.

Now, watching Calista dressed even more lavishly than the day before, she grew increasingly envious.

"How many times has this been? How many illegitimate daughters does the Brooks family have tucked away?"

Her words were dripping with sarcasm.

Calista was nearly beside herself with rage upon hearing them.

One by one, they all seemed to give her a hard time for Vivienne's sake.

What was so great about Vivienne?

She was Kala's cousin, too.

Why could Kala not stand up for her just once?

"Calista, don't mind those words. Today is your welcome party, and we must redeem ourselves," Mila said, standing by Calista's side and having overheard the conversation.

The term "illegitimate daughter" was harsh, but it was also Mila's key to the Brooks family. Though

Scott had yet to recognize her, she was, after all, Calista's mother.

As long as that connection existed, she had plenty of opportunities.

Calista nodded, her fists clenching. "Mom, I've got a plan. My experiment made progress a few days

ago. Once I tell Percival, he'll definitely focus on me."

"That's my girl. Now that you're a Brooks, you must secure the marriage contract with the Ellingtons,"

Mila said, her eyes seething with hatred for Vivienne.

That little wretch!

Just like her mother, always stealing the men others liked.

In a new, yet equally elegant evening gown—yesterday's having been ruined—Calista stood with her

signature smile, waiting for guests to arrive.

As the night grew darker, not a single person showed up.

Calista's smile stiffened.

Not one person came to her reunion party?

Were they disrespecting the Brooks family?

Was this a mockery of them?

Just then, headlights pierced the darkness.

Calista lifted her gown and hurried forward with a renewed smile as only one man stepped out of the car.

Percival!

The Ellingtons had sent only him.

In his simple yet sharp suit, Percival exuded an innate steadiness that was intimidating and magnetic, compelling Calista to draw near.

The fact that Percival came alone filled Calista with joy, and she eagerly approached him.

"Mr. Ellington." Calista stepped forward, her voice laced with a hint of eagerness as she handed over the meticulously prepared dossier. "This is the latest progress of my research. I've already touched base with your assistant, but I felt it was better to discuss this with you in person."

Percival, however, seemed to look right through her, his gaze and steps veering off towards another direction.

The sting of being ignored froze the smile on Calista's face as she watched Percival's cold indifference



melt away the closer he got to Vivienne.

They had called off their engagement, had they not?

And yet, here he was, making a beeline for Vivienne?

What did Vivienne have, aside from her striking features?

Bitterness crept into Calista's heart, but she masked it with a sly smirk as her eyes caught the

shimmering chandelier above the podium set up just for her.

On the other hand, the Brooks family were taken aback by Percival's unexpected appearance.

They had thought no one would show up.

Mila was about to step forward when Percival, as dismissive of her as he had been of Calista, made his

way directly to where Vivienne stood.

Vivienne was a vision that evening.

Her strapless evening gown was the epitome of refined elegance, simple yet stunning. Her hair was

swept up, revealing her delicate collarbones, and around her neck hung a tasteful pendant. The

makeup on her face was subtle. She stood beneath the glow of the lights, dazzling and radiant.

"Vivienne."

Vivienne's attire clearly caught Percival off guard. His little girl had never been one for elaborate outfits, especially not for a trivial family reunion feast.

Yet today, she was dressed to the nines. Her get-up was not for Calista's sake, of course.

Vivienne's lips curled into a smile, "Mr. Wolf!"

As Leopold had spilled the beans, Mr. Wolf was planning to confess his feelings for her today!

She was quite looking forward to it.

Percival groaned internally. "Leopold, you've done it now! My carefully planned surprise, and you've just blown it."

Leopold, defensively, would later protest, "I'm innocent, Percival! It was Isolde who told me!"

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Behind Percival, a procession led by a man named Thomas marched in. Their hands were laden with an array of exquisite gift boxes.

As the boxes were opened, the treasures within were revealed for all to see.

Tens of billions in dazzling jewels.

Luxurious designer gowns.

Priceless vintage wines.

An array of rare and valuable medicinal herbs!

And deeds to properties?

Kala gasped in awe. "Going all out, aren't we? What in the world is Percival up to?"

"Could it be... A proposal?" Carl suggested, his voice tinged with excitement.

They had all known since yesterday that Percival's break-up with Vivienne was a playful ruse.

And now, with such a grand display, it seemed certain he was about to pop the question!

"Vivienne, I've handpicked all these items just for you," Percival said, his eyes softening as they met

Vivienne's. He was smiling, his demeanor as warm as the sun's rays. "You wanted a breakup, and I

agreed. But as for chasing after you again, it's because I love you. This has nothing to do with your

mother or the Ellington family. From now on, our relationship is about no one else but us."

Percival took the box with the property deeds and handed them to Vivienne. "These are the deeds to all

my properties, now in your name. I'm not one for pretty words, Vivienne. All I can say is that everything

I have is yours.

I will do everything in my power to protect you, to love you. Anything others have, my girl will have too.

And what they don't have, you'll have even more. From this moment on, you are my everything, the joy

I look forward to for the rest of my days. Vivienne, will you marry me?"

Vivienne was utterly petrified.

Was this not just supposed to be a confession?

How did it turn into a marriage proposal?

Marriage?

She was so young!

Well...

Looking at Mr. Wolf's stern face and those sensual lips, she did kind of want to pounce on her man!

But there were too many people around. It would be inappropriate!

Seeing Vivienne's silence, Percival continued, "I've already started liquidating my assets. Once that's

settled, everything will be managed by you! Ahem! Just allot me a little spending money, and I'll be

fine."

Vivienne's eyes sparkled. "I like the sound of that!"

Carl could not help but laugh. "Vivienne, you sound like a gold digger!"

To those unaware, one could think Vivienne was poor.

But in reality, her black card casually boasted billions in assets!

In Carl's eyes, Percival was the one reaching for the stars by marrying Vivienne.

Vivienne shot Carl a serious look. "That's because I am!"

Carl was speechless.

Vivienne turned back, her eyes sparkling with anticipation. "Is there anything else?"

Sure, taking over all of Mr. Wolf's assets was nice. But she had not seen what she really wanted.

She was a tad disappointed.

Percival could read Vivienne like an open book. He chuckled warmly and tapped her nose indulgently.

"I've already prepared it for you!"

His laugh was enchanting, like that of an ancient fairy.

Vivienne was almost lost in it.

Percival gestured, and Thomas promptly brought forward an eight-inch cake with reverence.

Strawberry cake!

Vivienne's attention was instantly captured. Suddenly, Mr. Wolf did not seem quite as appealing in comparison.

This was, of course, not because she was fickle!

"Vivienne, will you marry me?" Percival pressed, seizing the moment.

"Yes!" Vivienne exclaimed without hesitation.

Money and cake! Marriage was quite the lucrative affair, it seemed!

She wondered if doing this a few more times would be possible.

Percival's smile deepened. "Then I'll go have a word with Grandpa about picking a good date for the wedding. I'll also discuss the details with Dad."

Vivienne was only twenty, not quite appropriately old enough. They could wait a couple more years.

And he was willing to wait.

As for the "Dad" he mentioned, it was, of course, not Scott!

That spot was reserved for Dorian, the father she hoped to have there.

Scott... He had nothing to do with this.

"Sounds good!"

Meanwhile, Calista watched the unfolding scene, feeling a piercing pain in her eyes.

Her hands clenched into fists, her nails digging into her skin, brimming with hatred.

Why?

They had broken up, so why was he proposing again?

No!

She could not let Percival and Vivienne continue this farce!

With that thought, Calista's gaze drifted to the chandelier above.

The chandelier swayed precariously, about to fall. With a loud cry of "Watch out!", she dashed forward,

attempting to push Vivienne out of harm's way. However, before her hand even touched Vivienne, she

saw Vivienne step aside with a cold expression.

Calista hesitated, and then a cold glint flashed in her eyes as she lunged for a nearby speaker instead.

"Bang!"

The force of her action was so great that the sound of her arm breaking was unmistakable.

Everyone was shocked by the scene.

Mila was the first to react, rushing to Calista's side. "Calista, are you all right?"

Judith and several others followed.

Seeing the accident, Judith asked with concern, "How could the chandelier just fall? Calista, are you hurt?"

Calista cradled her arm in agony, shaking her head. "I'm fine. I'm just worried about Vivienne. I hope she isn't injured."

Struggling to her feet, she walked towards Vivienne, feigning relief. "I'm glad you're okay, Vivienne. It all happened so fast. I could only manage to push you out of the way."

After speaking, her eyes lowered, hiding a flash of malice.

She had miscalculated again.

She originally had it all figured out. The spot where Vivienne stood was close to a barely noticeable, sharp piece of rebar. All she needed to do was give Vivienne a push. Given Vivienne's height, it would be curtains for her.

However, to Calista's astonishment, Vivienne sidestepped just in time.



Her plan had fallen through.

Why did Vivienne always have such dumb luck?

Vivienne looked up, a sly half-smile playing on her lips as if she knew exactly what Calista wanted to do and found it amusing.

That look got under Mila's skin. Fuming, she stormed over and grabbed Calista's hand, venting, "Why on earth did you save her? Just look at her. Anyone with a shred of decency would at least mutter a 'thank you.' But no, not her. And that smug look she's giving you!"

The more Mila ranted, the angrier she got, tugging Calista away. "Come on, I'm taking you to the ER for a check-up!"

"Ouch!"

Calista winced, "Mom, easy!"

Mila was startled. "What's wrong with your hand? I didn't pull that hard!"

Even Judith said, "Calista, if you're hurting, you have to tell us. Don't just tough it out!"

Clutching her hand, Calista grimaced, "I think it's broken!"

"What?" Mila's voice shot up an octave, "Your hand is your livelihood. You're a surgeon, for heaven's

sake! A fracture could ruin your career! Calista, was it really worth it to wreck your hand for such a

heartless person?"

#### Chapter 370

Calista cast a furtive glance toward Vivienne and murmured in a hushed voice, "Mom, please stop

talking!"

She looked utterly heartbroken. Already beautiful, her crestfallen expression only amplified her appeal,

tugging at the heartstrings of anyone who saw her.

Mila only had this one precious daughter, and seeing her suffer such indignity was more than she could

bear. Her voice rose in volume, "Why shouldn't I speak? I'm going to!"

She marched up to Vivienne, her anger palpable. "Vivienne, you've had it in for Calista from the start.

Nothing she does pleases you, but she risked herself to save you today! Your attitude is utterly

disgraceful!"

Vivienne raised her eyebrows slightly, her expression cool and detached, "And? Should I kneel and

bow my head to her in gratitude?"

Mila was taken aback. "When did I ever ask you to kneel to her? Don't twist my words. I'm saying, at

the very least, you should say thank you."

Judith, who had been silent up to this point, interjected with a disapproving tone, "Vivienne, your behavior is indeed deplorable. No matter what, Calista is your sister. Whatever grudges you had should be in the past. Today, she saved you because, despite everything, you share the same father. You don't have to shower her with thanks, but a simple thank you is basic courtesy."

Her gaze darkened as she continued, "Or has your mother never taught you any manners?"

Suddenly!

Vivienne's eyes darkened, her presence turning icy. Beneath her haute couture gown, she stood regal as a queen bathed in sunlight, her radiance momentarily blinding.

She glanced at Judith with a chilling gaze, her voice flat as she said, "My mother is dead. You could try asking her in the afterlife how she raised me."

Judith's face soured instantly. "What kind of talk is that? As your grandmother, am I not allowed to speak for your own good? I remember your mother as a gracious and considerate woman, well-liked by the Brooks family. How is it that you're so rude? You would do well to learn some life lessons from your mother."

"Haha!" Vivienne laughed, dazzling yet like a poisonous flower capable of ensnaring one with a glance.

She looked up at Judith, her voice icy. "When Paula managed to steal Scott's sperm, Judith, you played no small part. A person with a venomous heart, living a life of pretense, you dare teach me?"

Judith's face turned stormy with anger, "What nonsense are you spouting? Is this how a younger person speaks to an elder?"

"I wasn't aware there was an issue with Vivienne's manners," Percival interjected casually, hands in pockets, casting a cool glance at Judith. "Perhaps you'd care to enlighten us?"

The mere Brooks family!

Time and again, they dared to mistreat his Vivienne in his presence. Had it not been for Vivienne's preference to handle her own affairs, they might have mistaken his patience for weakness.

He had planned to leave the Brooks family alone until that particular matter was resolved.

But since they seemed eager not to let well enough alone, he was ready to expedite their downfall.

Were they really under the impression that he was just a figurehead fiancé?

"What's there to say?" Judith was truly furious now, her words losing restraint. "Ever since she returned

to the Brooks family, she's been nothing but cold to us. Anything we do is wrong in her eyes, and she never shows any appreciation.

We threw a reunion party for her, and she turned it into a farce. When her siblings took her to the gemstone market, she had Eddy broadcast something most uncouth, landing him in jail time and time again.

We treated her adoptive parents with hospitality, but did it earn us any gratitude from her?

And now, her sister has come back. Out of consideration for her feelings, we haven't been overly kind to Calista. Yet today, despite past grievances, Calista injured her hand to save her, and this is how she reacts.

Am I wrong as an elder to even speak? Why can't I say you should learn from your mother? Vivienne, you simply do not measure up to your mother in thoughtfulness!"

"Haha!" Percival chuckled. It was charming yet dangerous.

He glanced at Thomas, his voice melodious yet sinister. "It seems the Brooks family has many unsettled scores. Thomas, bring over a couple of chairs. Vivienne and I will sit down and settle each and every one."

"Yes!" Thomas cast a cold look at Judith and went to fetch the chairs.

Soon, with chairs in place, Percival took Vivienne by the hand and sat down. Though seated, they exuded an aura of royalty that diminished the presence of the Brooks family and Mila and her daughter.

Percival crossed his legs, his long fingers tapping rhythmically on his knee as his deep gaze swept over the Brooks family before settling on Judith. He turned to Vivienne and said, "Vivienne, there are many accounts to settle. Where shall we begin?"

Vivienne's lips curled slightly. "I'm not great with numbers, Mr. Wolf. You decide."

"Very well."

Percival's gaze returned to Judith. "Let's start with the incident at Emerald Mountain when you saved Judith."

There was a time when he would address the Brooks family with respect.

But they were no longer deserving now.

Judith felt a sudden twinge of unease at the turn of events.

Before Percival could utter a word, she jumped in, "What are you trying to do? Do you really think you

can tally up such a debt?"

"Judith, easy now," Percival said calmly. "I'm quite the mathematician, you know. Won the International Math Olympiad when I was sixteen. You can look it up. So, I'm great at settling accounts!"

His light tone belied an unsettling chill that seemed to permeate the room.

Judith bristled, ready to retort, but Percival was already speaking again. "If my memory serves me right, whether it be Scott, you, Judith, or the entire Brooks family, you've all said my teacher was your favorite lady, the perfect match for Scott."

He paused briefly, then added, "Forgot to mention, Karen is my teacher."

"What?" The Brooks family was taken aback!

None of them had expected this twist in the relationship between Karen and Percival!

Percival paid no mind to their shock, continuing nonchalantly, "So answer me yes or no."

"Yes," Came the first reply from Scott.

In his heart, Karen was irreplaceable.

Percival glanced at him and then turned his gaze to Judith, a sly smile playing on his lips. "Then perhaps, Judith, you'd care to explain why you brought a hitman along when you went to Emerald

Mountain to ask Finnian about Karen's child?"

The Brooks family was stunned!

A hitman?

What was this about?

They all knew about the trip, how Judith had said she needed to find the child's whereabouts and had gone to Emerald Mountain alone.

They had offered her bodyguards, but she had turned them down.

Yet now, it seemed she had taken a hitman with her.

Why?