

Million-Dollar 421

Chapter 421

Richard always played the impartial patriarch role with the Ellington clan's younger generation.

Right from wrong was clear in his heart.

Today, Fiona's transgression was not just a simple offense against Vivienne. As the head of the company's jewelry design department, she represented the company's image, and being caught in a lie in front of so many people could have a catastrophic impact on the company if she had not been fired. Especially with key business partners in attendance.

Had Fiona been humble and sought advice, she might have avoided such a fate.

Seeing Richard's demeanor, Fiona knew the outcome was inevitable. Her place at the company was lost.

Fiona pressed her lips. "Grandpa, keep the money for yourself."

With that, she grabbed her purse and left without looking back.

After her departure, Percival remained seated in the living room, silent.

Richard eyed him several times before finally tapping his cane on his grandson's leg. "What in the world happened tonight, kid?"

"It's settled, Grandpa. No need to worry," Percival replied, rubbing his leg where the cane had hit. The

old man still had some strength in him.

Richard huffed, stroking his beard. "We had left the hall when we heard a faint explosion, so I called

Fiona to handle it. She told me there had been a car accident."

Percival's lips curled into a slight smirk. "There was an accident, but it's been taken care of."

Hearing this, Richard did not press further. He got up with the help of his cane and headed to his

bedroom to sleep.

Percival was also about to retire for the night when he caught sight of Kenneth skulking near the

stairway.

"Haven't jumped enough?" Percival said with a cold glance.

Kenneth shook his head vigorously. "Bro, erm... Is Vivienne really Hawk's special coach?"

"Weren't you in the lounge earlier when you saw her?" Percival raised an eyebrow.

Kenneth felt like his brain had been struck by lightning.

His brother had confirmed it. The truth was undeniable!

Oh, the horror!

What had he done to his idol?

"I'm heading to my room." He didn't want to speak to his beloved brother right now.

So annoyed!

Why did Percival not tell him sooner?

Kenneth trudged back to his room, despondent and defeated.

Percival watched him go, for the first time, considering taking his brother to get his head examined.

...

At the TCL Laboratory.

Calista's latest experiment had failed once again.

In frustration, she knocked everything on her desk to the floor.

Why could she not make a breakthrough?

After all this time, she had nothing but failures to show for her efforts. How would she ever create the virus?

"Director, is everything alright?" A researcher called from outside the door after hearing the commotion.

"I'm fine. Leave me be." Calista snapped, closing her eyes in defeat.

As the lab returned to silence and the last sound of someone clocking out reached her ears, Calista was left alone with her fear.

Scott had been arrested, and here she was, still toiling away for them!

Suddenly, the door to her lab was opened.

Calista grabbed a hidden dagger from her desk and held it defensively as she eyed the doorway.

A figure in a black trench coat and a masked hat stepped inside, identical to Scott's usual attire.

Calista took a step back. "Mr. B," she uttered with caution.

Mr. B flicked his finger, effortlessly knocking the dagger from her grasp. "Don't point such dangerous things at me," he said, his voice cold and modified by a device.

Calista swallowed hard, retreating further.

Mr. B ignored her, scanning the broken lab equipment and scattered research data with a furrowed brow. "Had I known you'd be this useless, I might have left you to rot in jail."

Calista felt her breath catch, her legs giving out as she fell to her knees. "...I will keep trying. I won't let

you down, sir. Please, spare me."

Mr. B looked at her with contempt. "You have one more month. Fail again, and don't expect any mercy."

With that, Mr. B vanished as if he was never there, leaving Calista on the floor, drenched in cold sweat.

Her phone, which had fallen to the floor, suddenly lit up with a notification.

The headline read: [Ellington Family's Seventh Grandson's Fiancée Vivienne Hawthorn Revealed to be

Master Jessica! How Many Faces Does the Future Mrs. Ellington Have?]

Calista glared at the name Vivienne on the screen, her eyes burning with rage.

Vivienne!

It was all because of Vivienne that she was in this mess!

If not for Vivienne, Percival would be hers, and she would be the future Mrs. Ellington!

That wretched woman!

Calista picked up the dagger and stabbed fiercely at the phone screen, channeling her boundless

hatred.

Only when the phone was in pieces did she stop.

Standing up, Calista regained her composure, changed into her regular clothes, and left the laboratory.

...

The next day.

As she opened her eyes, her phone was flooded with messages.

[Vivienne, are you up yet?]

[Vivienne, what do you feel like eating?]

[Vivienne, I miss you so much!!!]

[Vivienne...]

Among the barrage of messages, she finally found one that was not from Percival.

She clicked on it to find a picture sent by Draven.

Using his newly acquired disguise skill, he transformed himself into the spitting image of a guy named

Stephen.

[Hey, Vivienne, I've pretty much nailed this disguise thing. Should I keep them alive?] He asked,

referring to Rowan and Ismene.

She texted back, [Let's make it a win-win. Teach them some of our tricks. It's good to have extra hands

on deck.]

[Got it. Oh, and Vivienne, Brian lost track of Brody again.] Updated at Dramanovels.com

It was a typical screw-up, losing him like that.

Vivienne simply replied, [Let him figure it out on his own.]

After sending the message, she initiated a video call to Percival.

Meanwhile, the doorbell chimed.

She opened the door to find Percival playing with LEGO bricks alongside Thaddeus.

A flicker of joy crossed Vivienne's eyes. "Mr. Wolf?"

Percival sighed silently. Clearly, she was not excited because of him.

"We'll head over soon. You just stay put and behave," he said.

Vivienne nodded vigorously. "Sure, go ahead."

Right. As if she had any intention of paying him more attention.

No sooner had Percival left with Dorian's family than Astrid emerged from the bedroom.

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Astrid fidgeted nervously beside Vivienne, apparently still wracked with guilt over the previous day's

events.

Vivienne, unfazed, glanced at Astrid with eyes as soft as a strawberry cheesecake and stood up.

Astrid halted her with a call, "Vivienne."

Vivienne's lips curved into a smile, her bright eyes flashing with disinterest. "What is it?"

Astrid rose and approached her, lifting her shirt.

On her slender waist was a hideous black scar.

A knife wound, poisoned.

Astrid clenched her fist. "I got this on a mission when I fell into the enemy's trap. Now, I still suffer from the pain, especially when it rains, my whole body aches.

Vivienne, I'm not trying to gain your sympathy. I just want to tell you that we've sacrificed our lives to ensure that our organization can develop a defense against the biochemical weapons of rival nations.

So, on behalf of the organization and our country, I'm inviting you to join our fight!"

Vivienne's gaze fell on the scar on Astrid's waist.

It was clearly real.

She grasped Astrid's wrist and felt for her pulse.

The poison had been lurking in her body for years; she, indeed, had suffered greatly.

Vivienne casually took out a life-saving pill and popped it into Astrid's mouth. "This poison isn't hard to cure. Just come to me once a day."

After a pause, she added, "I'm quite interested in what you've said. I'll give it a try."

Astrid froze, surprised. "You mean you agree?"

Vivienne nodded slightly. "Yeah, but I'm out if your experiments don't meet my standards."

"Great. You'll find our experiments fascinating," Astrid said with a smile. "I'll notify the organization and see when they can take you to the lab."

With that, Astrid went into her room.

Looking at her door, Vivienne let a sly smile creep onto her face.

She pulled out her phone and texted Percival, [How's it going?]

[Came up empty. You?]

[Hook, line, and sinker.]

Percival could almost see Vivienne's cunning expression from those words - like a smug little fox.

...

In the house of the Ellington family's second branch.

"Jeffrey, don't move. The doctor said you can't get out of bed yet," Heloise said, her heart aching for her son.

Percival's strength was beyond their imagination. A mere toss had broken Jeffrey's bones.

If it were not for the timely hospital visit, he might have lost his life.

Jeffrey limped to the couch. "I'm going stir-crazy lying in bed."

Besides, lying there was useless; he was in agony. It was better to move a little.

Jeffrey waved her off impatiently. "Never mind me. What about Fiona? Why was she kicked out?"

At the mention, Heloise bristled with anger. "What else? It was that wench Vivienne's doing. Percival isn't any better. No matter what, Fiona was good to him. How could he just throw her out of the company?"

"I told you, I should have joined the company instead of letting Fiona hog the spotlight. Now look what's happened. What are we supposed to do now? Wait to starve?" Jeffrey fumed.

Henry sat nearby, equally furious, shouting upstairs to Fiona's room, "Fiona, what are you doing hiding

all day? Think you can get back into the company that way? Come out and figure out how to ask your grandpa to reinstate you!"

Fiona was the mainstay of the Ellington family's second branch, with half their savings coming from her commissions at the company.

Now that she was out, they had lost a significant source of income.

Fiona sat in her room, ignoring her parents' and Jeffrey's complaints below. She put on headphones, locked the door, and tuned them out.

Being ousted from the company was not her most pressing concern. It was her clandestine dealings that weighed on her mind.

Her business was not just in the art galleries; she also needed the Ellington Group's resources and connections, even using their transportation to make her trades.

This was her livelihood, her foundation.

Moreover, she had signed agreements. If she failed to deliver as promised, it could cost her her life.

Fiona dialed an unknown number on her phone. "How's it going?"

"They're still in our hands, being moved as you instructed."

"Good. Keep a close eye. I'll find a way to get her out."

Ending the call, Fiona rubbed her fingertips, her usually cool face fading to gloom.

Then, an unfamiliar number called.

After hesitating, she answered, "Who's this?"

A woman's voice replied, "Ms., I'm Calista."

Fiona paused.

Calista?

They were not close, but Fiona had heard of Calista in their circles.

The once-proclaimed prodigy of traditional medicine, the cheap daughter of the former Brooks family patriarch.

Since Scott's arrest, Calista had also become reclusive. Why was she calling now?

"What can I do for you?" Fiona asked, her voice smooth, the earlier darkness gone.

Calista's cheerful voice came through. "Got time for a coffee?"

"Sure, see you soon."

...

Elsewhere.

After taking Dorian's family to a therapist, Percival picked up Vivienne.

They dropped Dorian and his family back home.

Vivienne ruffled Thaddeus's hair, praising him, "That's my brave boy."

But who the heck was Leo?

She glanced at Percival, who just shrugged his shoulders.

Who else could it be?

It was Leopold, of course!

All along the way, Leopold had been chatting with Thaddeus like they were about to become blood brothers.

Leopold insisted on not being called 'brother' but 'Leo' – it sounded much cooler.

Leopold said earlier, "Isn't it much cooler?" Content belongs to Dramanovels.com

Dorian nodded, still a bit shaken from the previous day's events and not in the mood for the office grind.

Then, with a hint of worry, he asked, "What about you, Vivienne?"

"Vivienne's in good hands with me around," Percival said softly, wrapping his arm around her waist.

Dorian had no more to say; with Percival by her side, he truly felt reassured.

After dropping Dorian and the others off at home, Percival and Vivienne, who had matters to attend to, took their leave.

As soon as they left, Astrid's bedroom door cracked open slightly.

Just then, her phone rang. She glanced at the caller ID and answered.

Whatever was said on the other end, Astrid replied, "Yeah, agreed. I'll start prepping. I'll bring her over tomorrow."

"Understood."

Astrid hung up the phone, her eyes shrouded in mystery.

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Downstairs, Vivienne slid into the car and pulled out her phone.

Another text message blinked on the screen.

[Transport, Astrid, someone else pitched in.]

Percival frowned slightly, "The mysterious informant again?"

Vivienne massaged her temples, her eyes reflecting a hint of frustration, "Yeah, still no trace. Whenever I try to enter their domain, my system crashes completely!"

The mysterious person's IP address changed with every message, and tracking them down led to system failures or outright computer crashes.

The hacking skills were so advanced that even she was at a loss.

Vivienne had been trying to track the informant with no success.

To this day, she still could not determine whether this person was an ally or a smokescreen deployed by GTO.

Percival glanced at the message, "Their wording is vague. Can you make anything out of it?"

Vivienne shook her head, "I can't make heads or tails of it."

The last two made some sense, but transport?

Was GTO planning to smuggle something out?

Their research was not complete yet, so what was it?

She did not have a solid theory yet and decided to pass the message on to the Nine Mystics Society for Draven to investigate.

"Vivienne, where to now?" Leopold asked.

Vivienne pocketed her phone. "We're heading to the Ellington Mansion."

"To the Ellingtons? For what? Percival, didn't you just leave? What's this, homesickness?" Leopold asked, puzzled.

Vivienne slapped the back of Leopold's head.

When would he learn?

Percival thought, "When's Thomas coming back? I'm going to go nuts with Leopold's chatter."

Thomas would have retorted, "No! I want to lie in bed forever!"

After being smacked by Vivienne, Leopold clammed up.

Vivienne's slap was not ordinary. It was painful as hell!

Leaning on Percival's shoulder, she asked, "Who's home?"

"Just my mom and granddad. Isolde's at school," Percival said, wrapping his arm around Vivienne's shoulder and gently kissing her forehead.

A sudden brake from Leopold nearly sent them both flying.

"Can't you drive? Hogging the road!" Leopold cursed, fuming.

They were in a limited edition car that usually commanded the road with ease.

Leopold had always driven freely, never expecting anyone to dare get close.

Percival glanced out the window. "Don't you see that car there?"

Then, he paused, a shadow crossing his face. He stared at the compact delivery van, his gaze

darkening.

"Vivienne."

"Yes?"

Vivienne replied solemnly, but a trace of amusement flickered in her eyes. She now understood the

message.

...

At the Ellington Mansion, Richard and Cecilia were busy selecting a wedding dress for Vivienne.

Though the wedding date was not set, it was always good to prepare early.

"This one's perfect; it will look stunning on Vivienne," Richard said, pointing to a gown.

Cecilia disagreed, gesturing to several other dresses. "Dad, I think these are prettier and suit Vivienne

better."

Within minutes, they had picked out a dozen gowns.

Percival walked in with Vivienne, confronted by a sofa covered in dress designs, and paused. "Mom, are you and Dad renewing your vows?"

Cecilia shot him a look and smacked his forehead. "Can't you say anything nice?"

Percival was at a loss for words.

Was everyone around him prone to violence?

Cecilia said irritably, "I'm too old for another wedding. These are for Vivienne. Move aside; you wouldn't understand."

She pushed Percival away dismissively and approached Vivienne with a warm smile, "Vivienne, you're here! Why didn't you tell me? I've prepared some treats for you. Hungry for anything in particular? I'll have it made right now."

Percival massaged his temples. He had wanted to greet Richard, but his grandfather had already made a beeline for Vivienne, making him feel invisible.

Fine!

He was certain he was not the biological grandchild.

Vivienne must be.

After exchanging pleasantries with Richard and Cecilia, Vivienne said, "Grandpa, my father deeply regrets what happened at yesterday's birthday banquet. He sent me to offer his apologies."

"No need for such formality. It wasn't your fault; it was Jeffrey's lack of sense. He should be the one apologizing to your parents."

Richard looked apologetically at Vivienne.

He knew she disliked the spotlight, but yesterday's incident with the other family branch had forced her to reveal her identity.

Vivienne did not blame Richard. His support for her was still fresh in her memory.

But because of some unsavory characters, the birthday celebration had been ruined.

She vowed to deal with them, one by one, in time.

After more small talk, Vivienne pulled out a sketchbook.

"Grandpa, I sketched this bracelet design yesterday. Our company's imminent partnership with the

Perez Group hinges on this. It should meet their standards."

Before Richard could respond, Cecilia exclaimed, "Vivienne, is this your latest creation? Isn't this the concept bracelet you introduced years ago? It's finally complete!"

Cecilia, though an aficionado of fine fragrances to the core, was no slouch when it came to curating a collection of baubles and trinkets.

Her cabinets were not only brimming with perfume bottles but also adorned with jewels that were the envy of the elite.

The last time she missed out on snagging Master Jessica's "Dazzling Stars," she had been in the doldrums for weeks.

But now, with Master Jessica as her daughter-in-law, a treasure trove was at her fingertips, ready for the taking whenever she desired.

Vivienne nodded in agreement. "Yes, that piece. I revised some details on it just yesterday."

Richard knew all too well his daughter-in-law's penchant for such things. To deny her would be to invite an endless plea. New chapter available on Dramanovels.com

"Alright, alright, it's yours." Richard chuckled in resignation.

Cecilia's grin was so wide it threatened to consume her face.

As they were basking in the moment, Fiona pushed the door open and entered.

Percival's gaze darkened slightly. Then, his eyes shifted toward the figure following Fiona.

Calista was there, trailing behind her.

Cecilia's mood soured instantly; while not well-acquainted with Calista, she was well aware of the

Brooks family drama.

Calista stepped forward, holding a box that contained an incredibly precious herb.

"Good day, Sir Richard. I took the day off and decided to come over with Fiona. I regret missing your

birthday feast yesterday, so here is my belated gift."

Richard's face remained impassive. "Hah! This old man's luck isn't that good, and I'm not rich enough

to indulge in such luxuries. You'd best take it back."

Chapter 424

Calista could imagine the frosty reception she would receive from the Ellington family, but she never

expected to be met with such outright disdain.

Of course, it was all because of Vivienne!

"Grandpa, please keep it. Don't disregard Calista's thoughtful gesture," Fiona chimed in, playing

peacemaker, and managed to diffuse some of the awkwardness.

Cecilia scoffed disdainfully, eyeing Calista with contempt. "Calista, my father already has a Specter

Healer's bracelet, a gift from our dear Vivienne. Your little present is redundant at the moment."

Calista's heart skipped a beat.

Specter Healer!

How did Vivienne come to possess something from the elusive Specter Healer?

The entire medical community knew of Specter Healer's enigmatic reputation, never leaving a trace.

How could they have possibly left something personal behind?

Where did Vivienne acquire it?

What infuriated Calista even more was the fact that Vivienne dared to give away something as coveted

as a Specter Healer artifact!

Those were treasures she could only dream of obtaining!

As Calista grappled with shock, Cecilia's smirk widened.

"Come on, Vivienne, let's go have some fun," Cecilia said, pulling her away.

Vivienne did not resist, allowing Cecilia to lead her off, only sparing Fiona a fleeting glance as she passed.

Fiona suddenly felt a chill run down her spine, unsettled by the penetrating gaze of Vivienne's eyes.

She felt she had been seen through for some inexplicable reason.

It was not until Vivienne and Cecilia had ascended the staircase that Fiona's shiver subsided.

She could not shake the feeling that she had seen those eyes somewhere before.

Percival stood up, briefly glancing at the herbs in Calista's hands.

Coming back to her senses, Calista was about to greet Percival when he abruptly spoke, "Aurelia, make sure to properly inspect anything brought into the Ellington home from now on. We can't just accept things from anyone."

"Yes, sir." The household staff, especially Aurelia, had served the Ellingtons for over forty years.

She knew precisely how to read the Ellingtons' moods.

They made no secret of their disdain for Calista, and Aurelia was more than willing to demonstrate her loyalty.

Aurelia promptly took the herbs from Calista. "Please let me inspect them."

Calista, feeling her cheeks burn with embarrassment, managed a strained smile. "Of course, Aurelia.

Thank you."

True to her word, Aurelia called the family doctor before Calista to check the herbs.

Calista fumed silently, forced to endure.

Percival, uninterested in the spectacle, followed Vivienne upstairs.

Clutching the banister, Calista's fists tightened as she watched his retreating figure.

It was all because of Vivienne!

Had it not been for Vivienne, she would not have suffered such humiliation.

After the family doctor confirmed the herbs were harmless, Aurelia returned them to Calista.

After recovering from the snub, Fiona sat next to Calista and placed the box of herbs in Richard's

hands.

"Grandpa, this is a token of Calista's respect for your birthday. You can't just turn it away, right? Please

accept it."

"Fiona, even if you're not working at the company, you can't just loaf around and bring troublemakers around. I'm tired. It's time for you to go," Richard grunted, tossing the box aside.

Just yesterday, Fiona had been ousted from the company, but as Richard's granddaughter, he showed a modicum of grace.

But as for Calista, Richard had no such consideration.

Fiona did not expect Richard to be so unyielding. After all, Calista was visiting under her friend's name, yet he refused to show a shred of courtesy.

What spell had Vivienne cast upon the Ellington family to have them so entirely under her sway?

As Richard dismissed them, Fiona and Calista had no choice but to leave.

At the entrance of the Ellington Mansion, Fiona saw Calista off.

Calista pressed her lips, apologizing, "Fiona, I'm sorry for the trouble I've caused."

Fiona's fingers clenched the box tightly, yet her face remained serene.

"Don't worry, it's not your fault. If only we could have come sooner," Fiona said, her head bowed in feigned contrition.

"Don't blame Mr. Ellington. It's all that woman's fault. If not for her, Richard would have never treated us

this way."

In just a few words, the blame was squarely placed on Vivienne's shoulders, as if by mutual unspoken agreement.

...

Somewhere within the secretive Rivenwood research facility.

Vivienne was led blindfolded by Astrid to the heart of the lab.

"Here we are." Astrid removed the blindfold, "Welcome to our lab. These are all our researchers."

Vivienne took in her surroundings: masked faces, white lab coats, impassive stares.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is the Vivienne I've told you about. The perfume formula that I brought back? She's the author," Astrid announced.

Only then did the researchers show interest. "You're the legendary Vivienne! Please, could you share some insights with me?"

"Me first, me first, please give me a hand here! I'm at my wits' end with this one."

"Ma'am, take a look at mine, it's urgent."

Looking over the data, it was clear there had been no progress for quite some time.

She etched every figure and detail into her memory, a faint smirk of irony lighting up her eyes.

Then, she addressed the questions that had been thrown at her, pointing out a few key areas.

With her guidance, it was as if a lightbulb went off in everyone's heads.

One by one, they followed Vivienne's instructions and restarted their experiments, and sure enough, they made headway.

Smiles spread across their faces as if by some unspoken agreement.

"So that's the underlying principle! I can't believe I've been so blind to this issue for so long. Ma'am, you truly are on another level." Updated at Dramanovels.com

Amid the chorus of compliments, Vivienne remained calm and composed.

Astrid said with a smile, "Vivienne, having you on board is like giving wings to a tiger."

Vivienne glanced at her, corners of her mouth ticking up slightly, "Let's talk after the lab tour."

"Of course."

Astrid then led Vivienne through the rest of the lab facilities.

Though compact, the lab was bustling with a variety of experiments.

After spending the entire day in the lab, Vivienne and Astrid finally headed home.

"How was your day, Vivienne?" Astrid inquired.

Chapter 425

Astrid chuckled dryly.

Mature enough?

If leaked, the research material in the lab would send shock waves around the globe.

Yet, in Vivienne's words, it was merely mature enough?

Astrid glanced at her and asked, "So, you agree to stay in the lab?"

Vivienne nodded. "Yeah."

Astrid breathed a sigh of relief and smiled. "Thanks, Vivienne. I really appreciate you agreeing to be

part of this experiment. Our progress will surely skyrocket now."

Vivienne did not respond. Instead, she turned her gaze to the car window, watching the streetlights fall,

and a slow smile spread across her lips.

After dropping Vivienne off at home, Astrid did not go upstairs. Instead, she turned the car around and

drove away.

In the back seat lay the experimental data Vivienne had revised that day.

...

Returning home, Dorian and Cordelia were already asleep, and even though the light was on in

Thaddeus' room, he was sound asleep, too.

Vivienne switched off Thaddeus' light and entered her own room.

The moment she opened the door, her steps faltered, her eyes sharpening instantly.

A chill ran through her as she looked towards the window - a piece of paper was wedged in the crack.

This was the twenty-third floor; unless it was an inside job, this kind of infiltration was extraordinary!

She was sure that apart from Dorian's family, no one else was here.

Obviously, she was dealing with a pro!

She walked over and pulled out the paper.

The message was a mishmash of newspaper cutouts, and crooked letters forming a single line.

[The TCL Lab.]

Vivienne's gaze dropped; she clenched the paper tightly in her hand.

She knew the person who sent this was not the same mysterious texter from before.

But who could it be?

Suddenly, she smirked.

Having had his fill of the outside world, that old coot was now seeking attention.

What was it? Did he want to see if she had lost her edge?

Her lips curled slightly as she pulled out her phone and opened Twitter, posting one simple tweet, [Pay up!]

She had resisted signing up for Twitter, but Matthew had insisted it was the rage and would not stop nagging until she gave in.

She had not used it since signing up, just letting it sit idle.

Since returning to the Hawthorn family, she had gradually become a public figure, and her Twitter followers had grown. She had about a million now.

After posting, her nine 'brothers' from the same master were the first to get the news.

While others were clueless, they knew there was only one person in the world who could owe Vivienne

money: their master.

One thousand bucks, unpaid for years.

Especially since he had faked his death, leaving them grieving for ages.

Now, with Vivienne's public call for payment, it was clear the old man was grandstanding again.

So, how could they miss out on helping Vivienne collect her dues?

Thus, all nine tweeted, echoing Vivienne's message, [Pay up!]

Vivienne's followers, as well as those of the nine, were baffled, wondering who owed her money to

warrant such drama.

When fans asked who owed her, only Leopold replied seriously, "The debtor is our master."

He even created a new account for Finnian and tagged him in a post, [Master, a grand isn't a fortune.

Time to settle up!]

This tweet sent their followers into a frenzy.

What was going on?

Was Vivienne's master dodging a thousand-dollar debt?

Any job nowadays would cover that!

Leopold's and Vivienne's followers began to retweet and tag Finnian, urging him to pay.

Seeing Leopold's tweet, the other disciples were stunned.

Dawson was the first to message the group, [Holy smokes! Leopold, you've got guts! Aren't you afraid the master will come for you?]

Daniel: [Nice one, Leopold! I support you. Keep it up!]

Eric: [I'll mourn for you in advance.]

Larry: [What's there to fear? A man's gotta have backbone! Just do it!]

Leopold replied, [Look at you all, scaredy-cats! Did Vivienne treat you right for nothing? It's her hard-earned money the old man owes. Aren't we supposed to help her get it back? If I were you, I'd be tweeting right now, hounding the old man to pay! Isn't Vivienne's happiness worth more than your little troubles? Besides, who knows where that old guy is enjoying his life? If we don't push, when will he show up?]

Jerry: [Makes sense!]

Brian: [Leopold used to be unreliable, but he's spot-on this time. We stand with Vivienne and must

stand up for her.]

Donald: [Enough talk. I've retweeted Leopold's tweet.]

Soon, the rest of Finnian's disciples also tweeted, tagging him and demanding payment.

Vivienne's friends and even the pop star Stephen joined in the retweeting frenzy, shooting Vivienne's

debt-collection campaign to the top of the trend charts.

Seeing her tweet at the top of the trends, Vivienne smiled slyly.

Twitter was proving to be quite the tool.

She had achieved the effect she wanted.

Maybe in the future, she could give Twitter a few more tries!

...

Meanwhile, on the other side of town.

Frustrated, he turned off his phone and glared at Percival. "Percival! How can you do this to me? If

Master finds out, I'm toast!"

But today, their phones pinged with a notification. It was Vivienne's tweet about collecting a debt.

That could have been the end of it, but no. Percival even impersonated Leopold's usual mannerisms to

coax the other eight into retweeting as well. Content belongs to Dramanovels.com

Leopold could already picture the look on their faces when they discovered the truth.

Even worse, he could imagine what his fate would be when his master returned.

Percival gave him a nonchalant side glance. "What, you expect me to incur your master's wrath instead of you?"

His fiancée needed their support in collecting a debt. Thus, as a devoted and honorable man, he could not possibly be the one to upset her master.

Naturally, that role best suited Leopold, the family's goofball!

As for the other eight...

Well!

As Vivienne would say, the best way to deal with an enemy was to hit them where it hurts.

Finnian was the perfect weak spot.

Leopold was speechless.

This sly fox.

Chapter 426

At a quaint little farmhouse.

Finnian, scrolling through Twitter trends, clicked his tongue in annoyance. "That damn girl! It's just a bit of debt. Does she really need to chase me down for so long?"

Next to him sat a man in his mid-forties wearing a tracksuit.

The man glanced at his phone, then at Finnian. "Told you not to gallivant around, but no, you wouldn't listen. Did you really think she wouldn't find you?"

Setting his phone aside, Finnian poured himself a glass of whiskey and downed it before facing the man. "What does it matter? I would never have left my precious disciple for so long if it wasn't for you.

After all these years, not a soul came to check in on me. I'm starting to miss the kid's medicinal cooking. Of course, her usual meals were delicious, too."

The corner of the man's mouth twitched. "You sure you can call that food?"

Finnian's eyes widened. "Cut the sarcasm. My disciple's cooking was delicious. It's just you unappreciative folks who would say otherwise."

"Fine! As long as you're happy," the man replied, clearly ending the conversation.

Finnian grumbled and took another swig of whiskey, then after a moment of silence, he said, "Look,

how long are you gonna keep this up? Don't outsmart yourself. That girl's got a fiery temper. I tricked

her once, and she nearly dug up my grave. With you... Well, you're in for it!"

The man chuckled dryly. "You better worry about yourself. She's found her way to Rivenwood. You

can't keep hiding forever."

Finnian scowled. "If you've got nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all! Such a buzzkill."

The man just shrugged and ignored him.

...

At the Ellington Group.

Fiona was clearing out her desk. The design department staff greeted her warmly, clearly sad to see

her go.

"Make sure you all keep up the good work after I leave, and get those new products launched soon ,"

Fiona instructed her coworkers.

"Don't worry, Fiona. The new line's already out. Mr. Ellington brought it in himself, a masterpiece from

Master Jessica."

A flicker of jealousy passed through Fiona's eyes, quickly masked by her composure.

So well masked, in fact, everyone thought she was pleasantly surprised.

"Fiona loves Master Jessica's work. Now that she's met the legend herself, she must be thrilled."

"Yeah, Fiona, what does Master Jessica look like? Can we have a meet-and-greet?"

"You think she's a celebrity or what? Just get me an autograph, Fiona, will you?"

The staff at the company were not aware of Vivienne's true identity as Master Jessica, and Percival

had made sure those who did know kept it under wraps.

Fiona forced a smile. "If Master Jessica were that easy to meet, she wouldn't be a master. Now that I'm

leaving the company, I have even less chance of seeing her again. I'm sorry, but I can't help you."

The staff did not press the issue but were visibly disappointed. Fiona had been incredibly popular at the

company. With her departure, there was uncertainty about who would lead the design department. If a

less amicable boss took over, their good days might be over.

After leaving the Ellington Group, Fiona made a call.

"Do it!"

...

Astrid and Vivienne were heading out.

"Vivienne, have you discussed this with Percival? If you officially join the lab, you won't have the same freedom as you do now," Astrid said, looking at Vivienne with concern.

"Yeah," Vivienne replied, her eyes closed, arms crossed, her face weary.

Seeing this, Astrid did not press further.

She dropped Vivienne off at the lab, saying, "Take care, Vivienne. I've got other tasks to attend to, so I'll leave you to it."

Vivienne waved her off and slipped on a pair of white gloves, which snugly wrapped around her slender fingers, a mix of restraint and temptation.

After Astrid left, Vivienne turned to the team behind her. "Let's begin."

...

Meanwhile, at the Ellington Mansion.

Richard suddenly fell ill, collapsing unconscious. The private doctor could find no cause, and even the renowned doctors summoned from all over Rivenwood were stumped.

"Where's Vivienne? Doesn't she have some medical skills? Why not call her over?" Henry muttered,

but seeing Percival's stern face, he did not dare raise his voice.

Percival's brow was furrowed. "I can't reach Vivienne right now."

"At a crucial time like this, none of you are of any use. What good was it for my dad to care for you?"

Henry scoffed, then cried out towards Richard's room. "Dad, if only Jeffrey were well, he'd have gotten you the best doctor."

That was when Fiona hurried in. "Excuse me, let Calista have a look."

Calista stepped out from behind Fiona. "Mr. Ellington, let me try," she said.

With her medical kit in hand, Calista pressed her lips together and entered the bedroom.

Fiona let out a relieved breath. "Sorry, Percival. I was with Calista when I heard it, so I asked her to come. Grandfather's health is paramount."

Percival did not respond, just silently watching the closed door to Richard's room, his deep eyes reflecting a stormy light.

Soon, Calista emerged from the room.

"Is that medicinal herb I brought for Grandfather the other day still here?" Calista asked urgently.

"Still here," Aurelia called out from her vigil by the door, swiftly fetching the prescribed medicine.

Calista took a whiff of the concoction. "This is it. Brew it into a broth, and make it snappy."

"Alright, alright," Aurelia nodded vigorously, taking the medicine to prepare it.

While waiting for the brew, Calista explained to everyone, "Richard's illness didn't just appear out of

nowhere; it's been building up over time. Has Grandpa acquired any new items recently? Or eat

anything out of the ordinary?" New chapter available on Dramanovels.com

Richard's gifts were all stored in the gift room; he rarely wore anything else into the house.

The only item he currently wore was the bracelet that Vivienne had given him.

All eyes in the room turned to Percival.

Suddenly, Heloise exclaimed, "Could it be the bracelet that's causing the problem?"

Fiona pressed her lips together, saying nothing.

Calista stood agape as if she wanted to speak but could not find the words.

Chapter 427

Percival glanced at Heloise, his long fingers fussing over a wrinkled cuff, his thin lips curled in a half-

smile that was more sly than joyful.

Anxious at his silence, Heloise blurted, "Would you just say something? Your granddad's in a bad way, and you're still as cool as a cucumber? He really wasted his affection on you."

Percival's eyes lifted slightly, speaking leisurely, "The bracelet from Vivienne is fine."

Heloise was unconvinced, retorting, "Just because you say it's fine, it's fine? Calista, please, take a look for us. This can't be genuine. I always doubted that girl could get her hands on something from Specter Healer!"

Calista eyed Percival, who showed no reaction, and she gently suggested, "Mr. Ellington, perhaps it would be best if I take a look. What do you think?"

Heloise interjected, "Calista, never mind him. Just check it. If it's a fake, toss it right away!" Henry was getting impatient; this was a rare opportunity.

If he could use this chance to take Percival down, it would be his family's moment to shine!

Calista examined and sniffed it, her expression growing worse by the second.

"What's the matter?" Heloise demanded. "Calista, please speak up."

Calista sighed heavily, then said, "There's not much wrong with the bracelet itself, but..."

"Out with it already. You're killing me here!" Heloise urged.

Fiona tugged at Heloise's arm. "Mom, calm down. Let Calista explain. What's going on?"

Calista pressed her lips. "At first glance, this bracelet seems to be from Specter Healer, but it's all wrong on closer inspection. Moreover, the materials inside are nothing but residue—useless and potentially harmful. They could exacerbate old ailments and cause various complications in the elderly."

Heloise gasped. "I knew it! That Vivienne is nothing but trouble! Using this trash to harm our family patriarch is outrageous! This is as bad as murder!"

Henry's anger was palpable. "She must pay for this. That wretched girl, I'll take her to the police myself and make sure she never sees the light of day again!" He roared, ready to charge out, looking every bit the avenger wronged by Vivienne.

Fiona held him back. "Dad, maybe Vivienne was duped too. Don't be hasty."

But Henry was inconsolable and set on settling the score with Vivienne.

Suddenly!

Percival grabbed him, and Henry found himself lifted into the air, then unceremoniously dumped on the second floor.

“Ah! Dear!” Heloise screamed, rushing down to Henry.

After checking he was not seriously injured, she glared at Percival. “Your grandfather's fate is still uncertain, and here you are, ready to kill your uncle to seize power!”

Percival's icy gaze swept over them, sending chills down Heloise and Henry's spines.

After a moment, he took the bracelet back from Calista.

“A problem with the bracelet?” He asked, eyes cold as he looked at Calista.

Calista had not expected Percival to throw Henry down the stairs over a mere insult. Besides, it was Vivienne's fault; how could Percival be so blindly biased?

Calista felt indignant. “Mr. Ellington, the bracelet is problematic. It's what triggered your grandfather's illness. I think you must have Vivienne come over and explain herself.”

Percival narrowed his eyes, his smile carrying a profound meaning, “Then let's get to the bottom of it.”

As he spoke, the doors to the Ellington Mansion swung open, and Vivienne strode in with a box of strawberry cheesecake in hand, paying no mind to Henry's groans on the floor, heading straight upstairs.

“Mr. Wolf, I brought you some strawberry cheesecake today.” Vivienne appeared in high spirits, her

eyes twinkling with delight.

Handing over the cheesecake to Percival, her gaze flitted towards Fiona, adding depth to her smile.

Seeing Fiona's stunned expression only deepened Vivienne's amusement.

Fiona was taken aback. Why was she here?

Should she not be in...

Fiona hurried down the stairs, suppressing her shock, "Percival, I'll leave you to handle things at home.

I'm taking Dad to the hospital."

Leaning on the railing, Vivienne called out, "Fiona, be careful on the road. I heard there's been an

accident on Capital Avenue—a delivery truck collided with a Bentley. Quite the mess."

Fiona paused. "What did you say?"

"I said, be careful." Vivienne's gaze penetrated deeply, her smile radiant in her bright eyes.

Fiona, unsettled by Vivienne's captivating eyes, looked away. "I...I have to go."

With that, she rushed out, leaving Henry to Heloise, and sped away in her car.

She dialed a number repeatedly on the road, but no one answered.

Frustrated, she slammed her hand on the steering wheel, shouting, "Answer the phone!"

The continuous busy tone from the car's speaker system infuriated Fiona, who cursed, "Idiot!"

She activated the GPS and checked the location.

Sure enough, the tracker pointed to somewhere near Capital Avenue.

Following the navigation, she drove in that direction.

If there really had been an accident, it would not just be a matter of compensation. It could cost her her life!

After some thought, Fiona dialed another number.

"Code red, the goods have been compromised on Capital Avenue!"

The voice on the other end was mechanical, grating on the ears. "Didn't I tell you to find time to move the shipment? How could this have happened?"

"I can't explain it all now. Just hurry over here. I can't reach the driver!" Fiona said frantically.

"Understood."

The call ended abruptly, and Fiona gripped the steering wheel with trembling hands, panic flooding her gaze.

Please, let there be no trouble!

...

At the Ellington Mansion. Read at Dramanovels.com

Calista blocked the entrance to Richard's room. "Vivienne, I will not allow you to get near Richard.

There's something off about the charm bracelet you gave him."

Vivienne sounded like she had just heard the punchline to a joke. "You? Stop me from seeing

Grandpa?"

Calista fell silent, recognizing the scorn in Vivienne's eyes. It was as if Vivienne was reminding her that

she had no right to interfere.

Calista suddenly found herself at a loss for words. Her eyes widened in terror as she looked at

Vivienne.

Remembering the tales, Calista's heart sank.

Chapter 428

Calista froze.

Vivienne?

Vivienne was the Specter Healer? How was that even possible? How could she be the Specter Healer?

No way! Absolutely no way!

While Calista was lost in thought, Vivienne curled her lips into a smile. "The lab report from yesterday

that I let you get your hands on was meant for your eyes only."

With a flick of her wrist, Vivienne removed the needles from Calista's pressure points.

"You're Mr. B!" Calista gasped, her eyes widening in disbelief.

Hearing the answer she wanted, Vivienne said, "Mr. Wolf, we can leave now; the others should be

arriving soon."

Calista grabbed Vivienne's arm, "No, you're not Mr. B. Who are you, really?"

Vivienne shrugged her off with a cool detachment, "You talk too much."

With that, she headed downstairs.

Before Calista could wrap her head around what was happening, Percival knocked her out with a chop

to the neck.

Dragging her by the leg, he hauled her down the stairs.

"Mr. Wolf, do you always have to be so rough? Can't you find a more subtle approach?" Vivienne

clicked her tongue.

Jeffrey was still nursing a fracture, Henry wasn't faring much better, and now Calista was being dragged away too.

Talk about brute force.

"It's efficient. I'm not skilled with the needles like you are," Percival replied nonchalantly.

As long as it shuts them up, it works.

Vivienne didn't know what to say, but she wondered if Percival might one day turn to domestic violence.

Glancing down at her petite frame, she questioned whether she could withstand a punch from Percival.

Percival seemed to catch her drift and touched her head with his free hand, speaking earnestly, "I'm a good man!"

Not only would he never consider harming Vivienne, but even if he did, he probably couldn't take her down. After all, she had the ability to immobilize him with just a needle.

Her thoughts always seemed to follow a different track from everyone else's.

Vivienne blinked, her long lashes fluttering, "Only a jerk would have 'I am a good man' written all over

his face."

Percival was left speechless.

That hit home. Babe!

Vivienne's lips curled into a smile, and she casually looped an arm around Percival's neck, buddy-buddy style, "Don't worry, Mr. Wolf. Even if you did lay a hand on me, it would just mean a midnight chat with my mom by your bedside. A little heart-to-heart over coffee, maybe some life advice."

Percival couldn't help but wonder if his mother-in-law might actually be rising from her grave.

He felt a chill run down his spine at the thought.

Before he could speak, Vivienne continued with utmost sincerity, "And the nine disciples might want to have a word with you too. They might gift the Ellington family with an occasional bomb, but don't worry, Mr. Wolf, you have plenty of real estate. Just buy another house if one gets blown up."

Percival was rendered silent.

"However, appeasing my master isn't a simple task," Vivienne clicked her tongue. "The old man is exceptionally protective, and if he discovers his precious disciple has taken a beating, he could make your life a living hell."

She paused, then added, "By the way, my master is a renowned geomancer. His talent for fortune-telling is unparalleled, especially in altering fates. Push him too far, and he might just change your destiny, maybe even to that of a beggar. The kind that faces eighty-one tribulations."

Percival thought to himself, "Fine! I got the message. Champion of ensnaring husbands! Vivienne, hands down!"

Percival wrapped an arm around Vivienne, his voice seductive, whispering in her ear, "Vivienne, would you really let me suffer like that?"

His voice was magnetic, sending shivers down Vivienne's spine. She raised an eyebrow, "Of course not. Let's keep things harmonious and loving."

Percival kissed her cheek, "Come to my apartment tonight, and I'll show you exactly what 'harmonious and loving' means."

This time, it was Vivienne who was silenced.

Okay!

She blushed.

If Calista were still conscious, she would probably ask, "Are you two even human? Here I am being dragged by the leg, and you're flirting? Have you no consideration for others?"

Of course, Percival and Vivienne believed there was no need to consider her feelings, as they didn't see Calista as a human.

Seeing Vivienne silent, Percival teased her earlobe with a smile, "Are you blushing, Vivienne?"

Vivienne cleared her throat, "Ahem! Business first!"

With that, she turned and walked away.

Percival chuckled. Vivienne blushing was quite a sight. He liked it.

But it wasn't the time for romance. He didn't tease her further and followed her out, dragging Calista along.

Before stepping out, Percival called out towards Richard's bedroom, "Grandpa, you can wake up now."

From upstairs, Richard's voice boomed, "No, I'll sleep a bit longer."

Percival was speechless, thinking, "So committed to playing sick."

At the door, Percival handed Calista over to Leopold.

Leopold hoisted her up like a sack of meat, "Where to?"

Vivienne pulled out a navigation system that was virtually unseen in the market, "Here."

"Got it."

Leopold, now, didn't dare to question Vivienne's instructions.

Suddenly!

Fiona's car zoomed in from the opposite direction, barreling straight toward the jammed-up mess of vehicles with laser-focused intent.

Thomas chuckled, tapping the earbud nestled in his ear. "Close the net!"

But it was too late.

Thomas and his crew had her completely surrounded. "My apologies, Miss," he said with feigned courtesy.

With a wave of his hand, Thomas mimicked Percival's chilling demeanor to a tee.

His men seized control of Fiona and her driver, popping open the trunk. Read at Dramanovels.com

Inside lay a woman.

Meanwhile, Percival and Vivienne had reached their destination.

"It's a trap," Vivienne said, popping a lollipop in her mouth and nonchalantly handing one to Percival.

Leopold looked on, "Hey, what about me?"

"Go ask your sweetheart for one," Percival shot back with a glare.

Leopold protested, "Sweetheart? Do I even have one? When I'm dodging bullets with you every day, when would I find time to date?"

Percival queried, "Did you really throw away Griffin Martinez's affections like that?"

"Please, just zip it. That shrew? She's the last person I'd want to marry!" Leopold retorted.

As they bickered, a sleek red car pulled up a hundred yards away. Out stepped Astrid, clutching a bomb detonator in her hand!

Chapter 429

Astrid eyed the laboratory entrance before her, the very threshold of a top-secret national research facility she had once infiltrated with Vivienne.

A sly grin tugged at the corner of her mouth as she pressed the button on the remote.

A gust of wind swept by, yet nothing ensued.

Disbelief etched across Astrid's features as she jabbed the button several more times, her expression darkening with each futile attempt.

Suddenly, she whipped out a gun, spinning around with a swift motion.

Vivienne, along with Percival and Leopold who was bemused, emerged from behind her.

Astrid showed no signs of panic; instead, a calm detachment washed over her.

"Figures, you're not one to fall for tricks so easily," Astrid declared, wielding the gun in one hand while discarding the useless remote with the other.

A flicker of regret crossed her gaze as she looked at Vivienne, "Had you joined us, our victory would've been assured by now."

Vivienne's eyes sparkled with amusement, her smile broad and radiant. "Your disguise is pathetic, Mr. B."

Mr. B, now unmasked as the impostor, gave a nonchalant shrug, making no move to remove his mask,

"When did you catch on?"

Vivienne pondered for a moment, "Around the time I stumbled upon Scott, perhaps?"

Vivienne then let out a derisive chuckle, "You were too naive."

Mr. B's eyebrows rose inquisitively, "Impossible. You'd never interacted with me when you blew Scott's

cover!"

A laugh escaped Vivienne, "Once wasn't enough?"

Mr. B's pupils constricted, still puzzled.

Before impersonating Astrid to get close to Vivienne, Mr. B had thoroughly researched his target. With the help of Alfred, the bumbling fool, Mr. B knew every minute detail of Astrid's life – from her catchphrases to her subtlest expressions and mannerisms.

Even Cordelia, her own mother, hadn't noticed anything amiss.

How could Vivienne, whom he had met only once, possibly see through him?

Observing Mr. B's expression, Vivienne knew he still hadn't grasped it.

She glanced at Percival with a touch of exasperation, "Mr. Wolf, I told you they were no fun."

Percival tenderly rubbed her head, showing empathy, "You've worked hard, Vivienne."

Leopold interjected with a note of seriousness, "Can we stay on task, please? This is a mission, not a time for public displays of affection!"

Mr. B clenched his jaw, "That's quite enough, Vivienne."

Vivienne's brows knitted together as she swiftly launched a silver needle from her fingertips.

Mr. B's control over his legs vanished, and with a thud, he knelt helplessly on the ground.

"When I'm speaking with Mr. Wolf, do not interrupt. It displeases me," Vivienne's eyes glinted with a cold edge, adding a chilling beauty to her already enchanting face.

Mr. B gripped his gun tighter but knew better than to shoot.

Regardless of whether it was Vivienne, Percival, or even Leopold, Mr. B stood no chance of a guaranteed hit.

In this open space, a well-trained individual could easily dodge a bullet. And even if hit by chance, Mr.

B was aware that he would be the one to suffer the consequences.

With his legs rendered useless, escape was out of the question. He needed to wait for the right moment to act.

Percival, noticing her hesitation, wore a subtle smirk, "Mr. B, you didn't actually think you'd get the chance to pull the trigger, did you?"

Mr. B paused, suddenly realizing his fingers were numb.

He looked at Vivienne's smug face and understood that he had been drugged and was powerless to

resist.

Percival's phone buzzed with a message from Thomas: [Subject is secure, no poison detected, organization contacted.]

Percival pocketed his phone, "Leopold, take him in."

Eager to act, Leopold stepped forward and subdued the defenseless Mr. B, handcuffing him with the restraints he had learned to carry at all times since capturing Scott.

"Mr. B," Leopold taunted, " My Vivienne has a knack for phrenology. No matter how you change your appearance, you can't fool her eyes. Did you really think you were flawless?"

Mr. B froze upon hearing Leopold's mockery.

It all made sense.

He had prided himself on his flawless disguise, yet Vivienne had seen right through it.

Vivienne hailed from the Emerald Monastery, a disciple of the renowned Finnian, whose greatest skill was reading people.

But extensive research had shown that Vivienne did not practice phrenology, nor had she ever offered such services. So how did she discern Mr. B's true identity?

Mr. B looked up at Vivienne, forcing a smile, "You've played along with my charade for quite some time.

It seems we must refine our art of disguise."

Vivienne shook her finger, "No matter how skilled you are, you can't imitate the warmth in Astrid's eyes.

The face reflects the heart."

Vivienne's talent for phrenology exceeded even her master's. Finnian often remarked she was a rare genius.

Until the age of twenty-five, she was forbidden from reading fortunes, lest she risk her life.

She had heeded her master's warning and refrained from the practice.

Although she couldn't read fortunes, Vivienne possessed the ability to read bone structure, a skill unrelated to mystic arts and solely based on physical attributes.

Due to her special circumstances, she couldn't regularly practice this skill.

Thus, her exposure of Rowan and Ismene was not through bone reading, but simply due to their poor disguise skills.

Mr. B narrowed his eyes, conceding the conversation.

Agents from the Vanguard Agency closed in, escorting Mr. B to the prisoner transport vehicle.

Leopold massaged his wrist, "Vivienne, you're a freaking psychic. How did you know he'd come back here?"

Even though the research facility was temporarily commandeered by GTO, the contents were a mix of truth and deception.

They wanted to use her to develop the virus they desired, worming their way closer through Astrid's connections, probing step by step.

And then there was her understanding of Astrid. She had only met Astrid once, but she always remembered the tenderness in her eyes, so similar to Cordelia's. That was something no amount of sophisticated disguise could replicate. Content of Drąmanovels.com

Like she said, the face is the mirror of the soul.

"Fiona, working with GTO? That's wild," Leopold had never been fond of Fiona, always felt she hid her cards too well.

But to think she'd stoop to colluding with GTO. She really would dabble in anything.

"It's not surprising," Vivienne chuckled, "She was behind the whole Boar Poison fiasco."

Leopold gasped, "What! The poison in Isolde, that was Fiona's doing?"

Percival's eyes narrowed, "Yeah."

For years, he'd been at peace with Fiona. But in truth, it was all just a facade, with very little interaction.

Vivienne's brows furrowed, "She still has a vial of Boar Poison, whereabouts unknown."

Percival's eyes turned steely, "Let's head back; we have to regroup."

Chapter 430

Three companions climbed into the car and soon arrived at the Vanguard Agency's secret interrogation room.

Inside, Fiona sat with her eyes downcast, lifeless and detached.

The sound of the door opening barely made her look up, only to drop her gaze once again.

Percival took a seat across from her, his deep-set eyes emotionless as they fixed on her, wordless.

A scoff escaped Fiona's lips. "Well played, Percival. You've bested me."

Small talk was the last thing on Percival's mind. He cut to the chase, "Where's the Boar Poison?"

Fiona stiffened, as if the question coiled around her like a vice. "What are you talking about? I don't know!"

He produced a video from the night at Spring Club, "You sat there for three days, and you still can't figure it out?"

Her fists clenched tightly. Those were undoubtedly her most humiliating days - unable to move despite her body's protests, soaked in her own filth...

Thinking about this, Fiona couldn't help but feel nauseous.

The disgust and fear in the eyes of the people who found her etched into her memory, unforgettable.

"How did you get that? Why..." Fiona snapped her mouth shut, a flash of realization in her eyes. "It was Vivienne, wasn't it?"

Percival didn't deny it, pressing on, "Where is the Boar Poison?"

Her eyes fell again, "I don't know."

Seeing his disbelief, she added, "After purchasing the Boar Poison, I handed it to Mr. B from GTO. You should be asking him, not me."

Percival's frown deepened, his silence hanging heavy in the air.

After a long pause, he stood and left.

As he reached the door, Fiona called out to his retreating figure, "Even without me, Percival, your days

of joy are numbered. Mark my words, you'll never take over the Ellington legacy!"

For a moment, Percival paused, the corners of his mouth twitching into a smile before he continued out the door.

Vivienne waited in the car outside. Seeing him emerge, she knew he had come up empty-handed.

Behind Fiona, there were others, a third party involved just as the mysterious text had suggested.

For years, Fiona had been using the Ellington Group and Jeffrey's gallery for shadowy dealings, trafficking artifacts and expensive artworks. The profits couldn't be just this meager.

However, Vivienne had yet to uncover this third entity.

Percival got in the car, his mood as dark as thunderclouds, lifting only slightly in Vivienne's presence.

"Expected outcomes shouldn't weigh on the heart," Vivienne said, her fingers lightly massaging

Percival's temples to ease the tension.

He held her hand in his, looking into her eyes, "I'm fine."

She nodded, understanding all too well that he was contemplating how to break the news to Richard.

Fiona was Richard's second favorite granddaughter after Isolde, and he had high hopes for her.

But life often defies expectations. Richard would no doubt be heartbroken once more.

Percival pulled Vivienne close, his lips brushing her forehead in a rare display of affection.

In the driver's seat, Leopold bit his lip. He said to himself, "Keep calm, don't get angry! Percival, you love-struck fool! Must you always be so affectionate with Vivienne? One day, I'll put an end to this!"

Of course, these were thoughts Leopold would only dare shout within the confines of his mind.

Suddenly, Leopold noticed the van designated for Mr. B's transfer parked ahead.

"What are they doing here?" he muttered, stepping out to inquire.

Percival and Vivienne exchanged a glance before following Leopold out.

"Captain," greeted the driver.

Percival's brow furrowed. "What's the matter?"

The driver looked confused, "Didn't you order us here to interrogate Fiona?"

"Who sent you that message!" Percival's urgency drove him straight to the van's cabin.

It was empty!

His anger erupted, "Where is he!"

The driver was dumbfounded, "Captain, we were told to release him at the crossroads for a vehicle

switch. He's long gone."

"Where did you get the orders?" Percival demanded, his presence as chilling as a glacier.

The men shrank back, "It came through the public screen."

The public screen served as Vanguard Agency's communication tool, where Percival usually posted missions using code names.

The message should have reached everyone.

However, both Percival and Leopold checked their devices, realizing they were the only ones left out.

Percival's grip tightened with fury.

The public screen was a top agency secret, impenetrable even to elite hackers. Only a select few high-ranking individuals besides himself had the clearance to use his code.

Who exactly had issued the order to move Mr. B?

At that moment, Thomas sent a message to Percival: [Captain, the subject is conscious.]

Percival pocketed his phone and spoke to Vivienne with as much warmth as he could muster,

"Vivienne, our guest is awake."

Understanding the gravity of Mr. B's escape, Vivienne nodded. It was no good news for her either.

"I'll go alone," she said, communicating silently that she knew what he was thinking.

Leopold handed her the car keys, and then he joined Percival in the agency's vehicle.

Vivienne drove off to the hospital alone, where Thomas waited outside. Seeing her arrive solo didn't surprise him.

News of Mr. B's disappearance had likely already circulated throughout the entire department by now.

"Madam, your foster parents are inside, quite beside themselves," Thomas cautioned.

Vivienne nodded, "Alright, you can go. I've got this."

With an acknowledging murmur, Thomas hurried off. He needed to find Percival, and fast. Today's complications weren't going to resolve themselves easily.

Once Thomas had left, Vivienne lingered at the door for a moment before pushing it open and stepping inside.

The woman Thomas had rescued was Astrid.

Cordelia was a well of pent-up words and overwhelming concern. Updated at Dramanovels.com

All Astrid could offer were soothing words. "Mom, it was just an accident, please don't cry. I'm okay,

look, Vivienne's here now."

Cordelia dabbed at her tears, "Vivienne, dear, you're here."

Vivienne nodded, "Mom, you and dad should head home. The doctor said Astrid needs to rest, and she shouldn't be overexerted. I'll stay with my sister."

"That's right, Mom," Astrid chimed in, "I won't be able to recover if you keep worrying like this. Please go back."

After a great deal of fussing and reluctant goodbyes, Cordelia and Dorian finally left the hospital.

Only later did they realize something peculiar: Vivienne had referred to Astrid as her sister!

Previously, Vivienne had simply called Astrid by her first name.

In the quiet of the hospital room, Vivienne set to work peeling an apple for Astrid. "Don't worry about home; I'm there to take care of everything."