

Million-Dollar 521

Chapter 521

The group froze at the news, and Mara gasped, unable to contain herself, "How could you be so heartless?"

"Only now, you notice?" Vivienne glanced sideways at Mara with a haunting gaze.

Mara felt a chill run down her spine from that look, and she stumbled backward, accidentally knocking over a glass of water on the table behind her. Clad only in her skin, she felt a bone-chilling cold envelop her.

Mara's mishap drew everyone's attention to her, but suddenly, a piercing scream from Wendy cut through the room.

"Ah!"

Teresa and Nancy turned to look and instantly went pale.

They backed away rapidly, pointing at Vivienne with trembling voices, "You, you... you actually dared!"

None of them had expected Vivienne to actually go through with it - to sever Wendy's hand without warning before they could even react.

Moreover, Vivienne's method was cunning; the blood sprayed onto them.

Vivienne just glanced at them indifferently, tossing Wendy's severed hand their way, her smile receding into a cold detachment. "You like to Photoshop? Keep this hand and Photoshop to your heart's content."

Wendy, clutching her stump, almost passed out from the pain. She glared at Vivienne, her face twisted with rage. "Vivienne, I'll never forgive you for this!"

With a faintly amused smile, Vivienne responded coolly, "I'll be waiting! Remember, come at me directly next time, and you might meet a quicker end. If you lay a finger on Mrs. Cecilia or Mr. Wolf, the wolves outside will be your final resting place."

With that, Vivienne turned and left.

Downstairs, Percival was the only one there.

Seeing Vivienne, he stood up and wrapped his arms around her waist, his voice soft, "All taken care of?"

Vivienne hummed in affirmation, then looked up at Percival, "I took a hand from the old lady. Will that upset you, Mr. Wolf?"

Percival tucked a stray lock of her hair behind her ear and said gently, "A hand is too lenient. I'd take both."

The idea that someone would Photoshop his little girl naked was enough to incite his wrath.

If Cecilia knew, she would have said, "All you care about is your little girl? I was Photoshopped, too!"

Vivienne laughed. "She's old. I left her a hand to eat with."

Percival pinched her nose affectionately, "My Vivienne is so kind."

Vivienne's smile brightened, "Mr. Wolf, you have good taste!"

Percival chuckled; he was fond of how his little girl acted all cute after getting the upper hand.

After some playful banter, Vivienne suggested, "Shall we go?"

Percival nodded, and they left together, his arms around her waist.

Outside, Vivienne did not see the Boyd men and asked, "Where did they go?"

"They're streaking downtown!"

Vivienne grinned, "Mr. Wolf, you're so bad... but I like it!"

Percival whispered in her ear, "Bad boys get the love. I've got worse in store. Want to try, Vivienne?"

Vivienne was speechless.

That man was relentless in his teasing!

In the car.

Percival buckled Vivienne's seat belt and asked, "Heading home?"

Vivienne shook her head. "Take me to Uncle Maddox."

Half an hour later, Percival dropped Vivienne off at the café and waited outside.

Inside the café.

Maddox sat by the window, dressed to the nines, his presence drawing gazes from all around.

Although nearing forty, his dashing appearance rivaled any young man's.

Jasper often said that Maddox was the Perez family's only black sheep, all show and no substance.

Of course, Maddox disagreed. He saw himself as pure gold, inside and out.

"Vivienne, I'm here!"

As soon as Vivienne entered, Maddox stood and waved.

Vivienne walked over, eyeing Maddox's flamboyant attire. Only he would dress so boldly.

Maddox preened, "What brings you here? Run out of cash? Here, take this."

He handed a credit card from his wallet, saying, "Dad cut off my supplementary card. This is all I can give you now."

Vivienne glanced at the credit card on the table, a gold card from Sea City Bank, a privilege not even the Boyds or the Ashfords could claim.

"I have enough money. I came to ask you to look at this." She pushed the credit card back and took out a notebook.

It contained all the details of a contract she had seen in the Boyd family, memorized word for word, and handed to Maddox.

Maddox looked surprised. "Where did you find this contract?"

Vivienne had not used the contract's format, yet Maddox recognized it as a contract, which meant he was familiar with the content.

"The Boyd Mansion."

Maddox let out a cold laugh, "They're still hung up on this?"

"Uncle, what is this?" Vivienne asked.

Maddox dropped his carefree demeanor and pressed Vivienne's notebook to the table, "Vivienne, you

know about the ancient warrior lineage, don't you?"

Vivienne nodded. "I've heard a bit about it but never delved too deep."

"The Boyds," Maddox said, "they were once an ancient warrior lineage."

That took Vivienne by surprise.

As far as she knew, when it came to ancient warrior lineages, only the Martinezes and the Perezes

were on the radar. She had never imagined that the unassuming Boyds could also hail from such a

noble bloodline. No wonder they had a so-called heirloom ring to prove the head of the family's

legitimacy. Content of DramaNovels.com

Cecilia had not shared much with her about the Boyd family, and information on the ring was even

scarcer. All Vivienne knew was that the ring held sway over the Boyds, ensuring their compliance.

Albeit, not an absolute compliance.

But what did Maddox mean by "once"?

"Did the Boyds leave the ranks of the ancient warrior lineages?" Vivienne inquired.

Vivienne furrowed her brows.

Bionics had been a topic of discussion among the ancient warrior lineages long ago?

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Maddox's voice carried a hint of mockery.

It was no wonder he looked down on the Boyds; after all, what they coveted had always belonged to the Perez family. The Boyds had stolen the secrets years ago, yet they had made no progress. And now, they were still obsessively clinging to it.

Theft had apparently become their legacy.

Vivienne could understand, though. After all, heirlooms handed down through generations often became seen as rightful possessions by the descendants.

But why were the Boyds, with their advanced bionic tech and contracts in hand, still seeking collaboration with the Ashfords? Was it possible they could not even decipher the contract themselves?

"Uncle, who did the Boyds draft this contract with?" Vivienne inquired.

Maddox looked down, his brows knitting together. After a moment, he spoke gravely, "The Perez family actually initiated this contract. It includes all the technical concepts and outlines for bionic technology.

When the Boyds stole it, the Perez family did not draft a new one or seek other partnerships. Instead, they decided to research on their own. However, to be precise, the project was shelved."

Maddox did not specify the other party of the contract, but Vivienne understood.

Some ancient warrior lineages worked for the nation; this partner must be the government.

She did not press further, content with knowing the contract's contents. The bionic tech from back then was no longer a secret; even as a child, Vivienne had been aware of it.

Her mother had shared the basics of bionic tech with her but had not divulged much, nor had she involved Vivienne in the work. The Ashfords were tasked with developing some of the more sensitive components.

After her mother's death, Vivienne had stayed away from the world, sequestered in a spiritual retreat, never meddling with bionic tech again.

Now, Vivienne was sure that the Boyds' intent in collaborating with the Ashfords was to reclaim their stolen technology.

"I've got it, Uncle. Thanks," Vivienne said, tucking the notebook away.

Maddox let go of the severity that did not quite suit him and smiled. "Hungry? Let me treat you to something."

Vivienne shook her head. "Nah, you should think about how to calm Grandpa down and get your credit cards back."

"You little snitch, you ratted me out to your grandpa," Maddox sighed, feigning betrayal. "All my kindness for naught."

Vivienne's cheeks flushed at the memory of that pink-hued night. She put on her sunglasses. "Mr. Wolf is waiting to have lunch with me. I should go."

"Go on then, ditch your uncle for your beau," Maddox waved her off, indicating she was free to leave.

Yet, he remained seated.

Vivienne smiled and stood up to leave.

As she walked out, a poised woman crossed her path. Her attire screamed wealth and status.

They brushed past each other, and Vivienne caught a whiff of a familiar fragrance - "Ephemeral," a perfume she had once crafted. After its launch, a mysterious buyer snapped it up, and later, she discovered that the buyer was the Perez family!

The woman glanced at Vivienne but quickly averted her gaze without any sign of recognition.

Vivienne slowed her pace, hearing the woman's voice behind her. "Maddox, I knew it was you! Saw

you from outside. What brings you here, a date?"

"Willa's not around. Who am I supposed to date? What are you doing here?"

Leaving the café, Vivienne had already pieced together the woman's identity.

Diana Perez, one of the Perez family's heiress.

Diana sat opposite Maddox, glancing at the departing Vivienne. "Maddox, was that the girl Dad took under his wing, Vivienne?"

Maddox finished his coffee as if it were water and said curtly, "That's none of your concern."

Diana's voice was tinged with hurt. "Maddox, I just wanted to help out. Why push me away? I just wanted to get to know Vivienne; after all, we're family."

"Diana, Vivienne doesn't like to be disturbed. You're better off staying at home or shopping the beauty salons." Maddox put on his sunglasses and was about to leave.

"Maddox, when can I join the company?" Diana stood up and stopped Maddox. "I'm old enough, and even Dad said I should get some experience, and Luke wants me to go, too. Why won't you agree?"

Maddox peered at her through his dark shades, his gaze intense. "If I'm not mistaken, you're thirty-five

this year, right? It's high time you found someone and settled down. That way, Dad can rest easy. You grew up in the Perez household; naturally, you'll have your share. You don't need to enter the company to claim your inheritance."

"That's not what I meant..."

Maddox cut her off sharply, his voice cold. "Then why were you snooping around for the contents of Dad's will?"

Exposed, Diana stood speechless, her pride wounded. Maddox had lost his patience. "Whatever your reasons, Diana, I'll let it slide this time. But if there's a next time, I won't be so lenient."

Diana stepped aside, allowing Maddox to leave. She watched him exit the café, her eyes filling with resentment. In the Perez family, only she and Willa were outsiders.

However, Willa was the darling of the whole family, while she was practically invisible, never even a blip on their radar!

That Willa was even the child of the family's enemy!

Why, oh why!

Just because Maddox liked her?

And then there was Vivienne, who had not even set foot in the Perez household yet and was already the apple of their eye.

Her sis-in-law even went out of her way to prepare the finest room for Vivienne to stay in.

She decorated it with more care than her son's room.

"I changed the paternity test! How did this happen?" Diana clenched her fists tightly, thinking.

Missing for thirty years, why did she have to show up now?

So, she altered the report, ensuring Vivienne could never reclaim her place in the Perez family.

And yet, even stripped of her blood ties, Vivienne had become an adopted granddaughter.

Why was life so damn unfair!

She slaved away, caring for the Perez family, so why did nobody like her?

Suddenly, a voice called behind her, "Miss Perez, staring won't make him turn back." Content belongs

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"Who are you?" Diana asked warily.

The woman gave a sultry smile and tapped the table, "Sit down, let's chat."

Diana looked around; nothing seemed amiss, so she sat down but remained on guard, "What do you want to talk about?"

The woman ordered an Americano, took a sip, and then licked her lips with an air of satisfaction, "Let me introduce myself. I'm F-Poison."

Diana was shocked to her core!

This woman was F-Poison.

But was F-Poison not supposed to be a man?

Chapter 523

The Boyd family was in complete disarray after Vivienne walked out the door.

Wendy collapsed in a faint, while Teresa, Nancy, and their daughters, were terrified, at a loss for what to do next.

The servants reacted first, calling the doctor and fetching clothes for the family.

Theodore and Hayden were livid with rage when they returned and saw the chaos.

Nobody had expected Vivienne, the girl from the countryside, to be so ruthless – not only had she set a pack of wolves on them, but she had also chopped off Wendy's hand.

How on earth did she manage to get a wolf?

And how did she have the power to control the wolves?

Wendy was right; Vivienne was dabbling in dark arts!

By the time Theodore and the others were dressed, the doctor had finished treating Wendy.

Theodore rushed to meet the doctor.

"Dr. Marcus, how's my mom doing?" Theodore asked.

Dr. Marcus was the Boyd family's private physician. Given the circumstances, they could not exactly broadcast their problems, so they called him.

"Madam Wendy received timely care; her life is not in danger. She just needs plenty of rest to recover,"

Dr. Marcus replied.

"And her hand... Is there any chance it can be saved?" Theodore pressed.

Dr. Marcus pondered momentarily before answering, "My skills are insufficient to reattach it. In fact, there's no hospital in the country capable of such a feat, but..."

He paused, then continued, "There is someone I've heard of, the Specter Healer, who is said to have the skill to reattach limbs. There was once a man paralyzed for ten years whom he helped to stand

again with just a few needles. However, the Specter Healer is elusive – finding him may be next to impossible."

Hayden chimed in, "I've heard of the Specter Healer too. They say he's over a hundred years old and possesses exceptional medical skills, capable of not only reattaching limbs but also of snatching lives back from the jaws of death. If we could get him here, it would not only save Mom but also benefit the Boyd family greatly."

Dr. Marcus shook his head. "Specter Healer is quite unpredictable, and he doesn't treat just any patient."

Teresa scoffed. "What are you saying? If we offer him a high enough price, why wouldn't he be interested?"

To her, whether Wendy's hand could be reattached was irrelevant – the old lady was in her twilight years anyway. But the Boyd family still relied on Wendy's guidance, and losing her influence would be detrimental to their standing in Sea City, a prospect Teresa found unacceptable.

If word got out that it was Vivienne, Wendy's granddaughter-in-law, who had maimed her, it would not just be Vivienne who suffered the repercussions; the entire Boyd family would be tarnished.

Dr. Marcus gave Teresa a look that bordered on pity. "With the Specter Healer's reputation, even when the royals of Fience Country offered him a fortune, he did not acquiesce. Countless wealthy families in Veridia have offered tens of billions to secure his services, only to be turned away based on his whims.

Do you really think he's short on money?"

Specter Healer was his idol, and he would not stand someone disrespecting him.

Teresa was taken aback, feeling annoyed. "He's just a doctor, after all. Billions? As if he's some kind of deity. If he doesn't want to come, we don't need him!"

Dr. Marcus's expression darkened. "Since Madam Wendy is out of danger, I'll take my leave. Oh, and by the way, I'll resign from my position as your family's private physician starting tomorrow. You might want to look for a replacement."

Theodore's face fell. "Dr. Marcus, why resign so suddenly? My mother still needs your care. You've been with us for so long, and we've treated you well. It doesn't seem right to just leave like this."

Dr. Marcus was silent for a moment before responding, "Mr. Theodore, I mentioned the Specter Healer out of respect for you, but I did not expect your wife to disparage him so. Since your family looks down

on doctors, I no longer wish to stay."

As Dr. Marcus turned to leave, Teresa snapped, "If you want to go, then go! The Boyd family can find another doctor easily enough! Not only are you dismissed, but I'll also ensure you can't find work in this field as long as the Boyd family has any say. No hospital will dare hire you!"

"Shut up!" Theodore roared at her.

Teresa retorted, "Am I wrong? Who is he to talk to me like that? To see a doctor is one thing, but why put up with such insolence? What use is he to us?"

Dr. Marcus gave a cold laugh and left without another word.

Theodore was furious, ready to lash out at Teresa, but Hayden held him back. "Theodore, now's not the time to fight. We need to figure out what to do about this situation."

Nancy, who had been silent, finally spoke, "What else can we do but call the police? Vivienne has done us so much harm; if we don't report her, aren't we just letting her off easy?"

"Bullshit!" Hayden cursed. "If we could have gone to the police, do you think we would have waited this long without taking action?"

Vivienne was too sinister. From the moment she claimed her position as head of the family to the day

she chopped off Wendy's hand, she acted without fear as if the police meant nothing to her.

Nancy had come to the same conclusion, feeling a knot of frustration tightening within her. "That wretched girl has played us, yet we're powerless against her."

"I've got plenty of ways to deal with her, but the real issue at hand is, what do we do about Mom's hand?" Theodore said gravely.

For now, they had managed to keep the lid on the incident, the outside world oblivious to the turmoil in the Boyd family. If word got out that the matriarch had lost her hand, there would be those who would dig deeper, which would spell trouble for the Boyds.

"What else is there to do?" Nancy snapped back, irritation lacing her voice. "The hand is gone. Are we seriously considering shelling out a fortune to reattach it?"

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Nancy's face flickered through shades of emotion before she replied with a forced smile, "Mom, that's not what I meant. Dr. Marcus did say there's only one person who can reattach your hand, the elusive Specter Healer. But there's no guarantee we can find him!"

With Wendy's command, her sons naturally agreed, "Yes, Mom, we'll track down Specter Healer."

Only Teresa and Nancy wore expressions of uncertainty, their thoughts unreadable.

"As for Vivienne!" A sharp glint flickered in Wendy's eyes. "Once my hand is healed, I will make sure

she pays."

Chapter 524

On the other side of town, nestled within a leafy suburb, Vivienne received a call from Rivenwood.

It was Griffin on the line.

"Vivienne, I've made another delivery of 'Morning Glory' to the Vanguard Agency just a few days ago.

They've been dispatched already, but they went straight to HQ this time without going through Micah."

Vivienne nodded in understanding. "How's the detector coming along?"

Griffin seemed to breathe a little easier. "The prototype's there, but we haven't been able to test it fully.

After all, I've only managed to create a new type of bomb based on the model we have. We need to

find the ones already planted by GTO to ensure it can actually detect them."

They had only found a model of the new bomb in Eastlake Bay. Though Griffin could replicate it, there

was no certainty that it was identical to the ones GTO had developed.

Only an on-site test would prove that.

What they could test at the base was far from conclusive.

"Mmm," Vivienne murmured. "Having a prototype is better than nothing. Ideally, it should be a universal

detector that can pick up your latest 'Morning Glory' creation."

"Don't worry, Vivienne, I've got this," Griffin reassured her, "The specifics of the 'Morning Glory' are already programmed into the detector model, and those tests have been successful."

Hearing Griffin's confidence, Vivienne felt a measure of relief. "Any other business at the base?"

Griffin picked up on her subtext, replying, "Nothing more. I've booked a flight, and we'll land in Sea City in three days."

"We?" Vivienne's interest was piqued.

Charlotte was busy with her studies and special training; she had no time to travel.

Griffin was not known for having many friends.

Yet, she was talking about coming to Sea City with "we"!

A bit embarrassed, Griffin's voice lowered on the other end. "It's that Husky. He wouldn't take no for an answer, claiming it was his boss' order to ensure the safety of the special agents. Spouted a whole list

of reasons."

Vivienne chuckled, teasingly offering, "If you don't like him, you can always request someone else."

"No, I... Vivienne, you're teasing me again!"

With Griffin's voice shifting shyly, Vivienne decided not to push further. "Alright, I'll pick you guys up in three days. Just the two of you?"

"And Anna."

Griffin handed the phone to Anna, who sighed heavily and said, "Ms. Vivienne, I was coerced."

"Understood. See you in three days." Vivienne smiled, ending the call with a soft tap.

Percival approached her, "Leopold's coming?"

"Yeah," Vivienne rolled her eyes. "Did he check in with you? Griffin said he insisted on following her."

Percival touched his nose thoughtfully. "Not exactly, but I'm on a mission."

Vivienne glanced sidelong at him. "Got a lead?"

Percival shook his head. "Just a hunch. Thomas is short on people. I thought about calling Soren, but

Leopold volunteered."

"Look at the kid Leopold getting initiative," Vivienne remarked. Then, her phone buzzed with new messages.

Draven: [Boss, I've set up shop in Sea City and gathered the men of the Nine Mystics Society. Awaiting your orders.]

Matthew: [Vivienne, the Boyds have put in a request with Frostfire Intelligence Agency, looking for the Specter Healer for bone-setting and a back injury. They're willing to pay any price.]

Vivienne's eyebrow quirked at that. Any price?

Reading the same message, Percival stated flatly, "Reject it."

Resting her chin in her hand, Vivienne's eyes glinted mischievously. "Why?"

Percival was perplexed. "You just chopped off her hand, and now you want to stitch it back on? Are you kidding?"

He pressed his lips. "Vivienne, as I recall, you're no saint!"

Vivienne's lips twitched. "Of course I'm not! But who hates money?"

With that, she replied to Matthew, [Five hundred billion for the bone-setting, eight hundred billion for the

back injury.]

Percival stared, dumbfounded.

As he suspected! Money was indeed, above all, in Vivienne's world!

After sending the message, Vivienne smiled at Percival and scrolled through her phone for the following message.

It was from the head of the Boyd family, Theodore, speaking on behalf of Wendy. They invited her, as the head of the Boyd family, to join Percival at a yacht party scheduled in three days. The invitation included the address.

The host was Patrick.

Vivienne's expression turned contemplative.

Wendy had just lost her hand and already wanted to attend a dinner party?

Wendy was old and bold, too.

Turning off her phone, Vivienne looked at Percival and asked, "Mr. Wolf, do you think you'll be able to use the item Eliza gave you in three days?"

Percival frowned deeply. "Vivienne, if you keep looking at me like that, I might have to use it right now."

Vivienne's slender finger traced a path down Percival's shirt collar, murmuring provocatively, "Then why not use it on me now?"

The air charged with a palpable tension, like waves crashing against the rocks, an endless cycle of ebb and flow laced with unspoken desire.

Percival's hand closed around her delicate wrist, the electric sensation zapping straight to his core.

Their gazes locked, the depths of their eyes reflecting only each other.

Adoration surged from within, raw and unguarded, spreading like a storm.

They had restrained themselves for too long, quieted for too long, holding back amidst peril after peril.

And so, a single flirtatious jest could set off an avalanche and a tsunami.

Percival pulled Vivienne into his embrace, his kiss searing with such intensity that it threatened to set her ablaze.

Vivienne, as ever, responded to his touch without a hint of reservation.

Their fingers intertwined, radiating endless tenderness and passion.

Vivienne buried her face in Percival's shoulder, her fair cheeks flushed with a rosy tint, "Why didn't you,

you know, lock the door?"

Percival's voice was a low murmur, his face half-hidden in her hair. "I forgot..."

They held each other for a long time, eventually unable to hold back their laughter.

Such awkward moments had become all too familiar to them.

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The Boyd family.

Theodore's eyes nearly popped out of his head as he read the message from the Frostfire Intelligence

Agency.

Wendy had not expected such an astronomical demand either. Clearly, the Specter Healer was

targeting the Boyd family's wealth.

At full count, the Boyd family had 800 billion in liquid assets.

How would the Boyd family continue to operate if they handed it all over to the Specter Healer?

But without treatment, Wendy faced a lifetime in a wheelchair, with one hand rendered useless. That

was not a life she was willing to accept.

Hayden was equally taken aback by the demand, at a loss for words.

The word "die" hung unsaid as they caught the icy glare of Wendy, silencing them instantly.

Chapter 525

Teresa wanted to speak up, but catching the stern look on Wendy's face, she bit her tongue.

But she disagreed strongly.

This was 800 billion, not a measly 800 dollars. Sure, she wanted Wendy's hand to heal, to make the

Boyd family prosper. However, spending such an astronomical sum on a hand treatment seemed

ludicrous.

Would that not be better if that money were split between their two families?

"Mom? What do we do now?" Theodore, coming to his senses, looked to Wendy for guidance.

He would have agreed without a second thought if it were a few hundred or a few million.

But 800 billion? He was much less inclined to spend that much on Wendy's hand treatment.

If she recovered, fine. But it would be like throwing money down the drain if she did not.

Moreover, treating Wendy's hand was supposed to benefit the Boyds, not drag them down.

Wendy hesitated, too.

This decision was a tough one.

It was then that Eliza hurried in.

As soon as she entered, she checked Wendy's hand and cursed, "That Vivienne is a piece of work.

How dare she do this to you? It's despicable."

She had been out handling some business for the Boyds yesterday and was not around. But she got a call from Wendy this morning detailing the situation, and without a second thought, she rushed over.

"You're here just in time. There's something I can't decide on my own. I need your opinion," Wendy said, giving Eliza a knowing look.

Eliza paused momentarily before Wendy added, "The Specter Healer claims he can fix my hand and my back, but his price is exorbitant—800 billion. I don't know if I should go through with it."

Eliza was stunned.

So much money for a treatment?

Of course, they could not agree!

But feeling Wendy's expectant gaze, she wavered.

Wendy clearly wanted to get better, but the first and secondary branches of the family were sure to disagree. Her mother was too proud to plead. So, Wendy turned to her to voice the difficult choice.

But Eliza did not want to agree either!

After a long pause, Eliza finally said, "Do it! No matter the cost, we should do the treatment!"

With Wendy in good health, Eliza's future in the family would be secure. If Wendy's health declined, her greedy in-laws would surely abandon her.

It was better to help Wendy now.

"Are you out of your mind?" Nancy was the first to protest, "All that money, and you just want to give it away? Do you think money grows on trees? I disagree!"

Teresa also voiced her opposition. "I'm all for treating Mom, but that's just too much money."

Then, one by one, Wendy's grandchildren joined in the opposition.

Except for Theodore and Hayden, who remained silent, the rest quarreled, their faces red with anger.

Eliza, face cold, said, "Let's discuss this outside. Don't disturb Mom's rest!"

With that, she led the way to the living room.

Half an hour later, somehow, Eliza had persuaded everyone. They all agreed.

...

Three days later.

The Ashford family's annual yacht party went ahead as planned.

It was tradition, ostensibly for family reunions, but also for networking and consolidating the family's influence and resources.

Despite the recent scandal involving Gillian, the turnout was impressive.

Everyone understood that the Ashfords controlled Sea City's most lucrative projects. Not to mention, they were a powerhouse in the whole region of Veridia.

Who would not want a piece of that pie?

The yacht was abuzz with guests, all smiles and discreetly sizing up Gillian as she stayed close to Patrick.

Gillian planned to use this event to showcase her talents and overshadow her past negative reputation.

Her previous manipulations had worked; many men were still loyally vying for her attention, even proposing fair competition.

Gillian knew that as long as she maintained her status, she would never sink into the mire.

If she could regain her former glory tonight, she could gloat in front of Vivienne and earn Percival's

respect!

She was determined to redeem herself, marry into wealth, and destroy Vivienne!

Patrick mingled with Gillian among old friends, who, keen on maintaining ties with the Ashfords,

lavished praise on Gillian's supposed virtues.

It was all an unspoken understanding.

After making the rounds, Percival arrived with Vivienne in tow.

Gillian's eyes flashed with envy as she spotted them holding hands tightly.

Patrick warned in a low voice, "Remember what I told you? No more scheming after Percival—at least

not now."

"I know, you've been drilling it into me for days. You want me to apologize to Vivienne, right? I'll go right

now." Gillian bit her lip, her eyes filled with reluctant acceptance.

But reluctant or not, she had to make that apology today.

She was playing the long game, and there would undoubtedly be opportunities in the future.

Gillian took a deep breath, picked up her glass, and approached Percival and Vivienne.

"Mr. Ellington, Ms. Hawthorn," Gillian greeted them with a faint smile. "Long time no see."

Given that it was an Ashford event, Percival and Vivienne would surely not snub her.

"What do you want?" Vivienne inquired.

"Ms. Hawthorn, I've come to apologize to you and Mr. Ellington. I was foolish before. Please forgive my past indiscretions. From now on, I truly view Mr. Ellington as nothing more than a brother and will harbor no inappropriate thoughts. I won't intrude upon your relationship anymore."

Gillian bowed her head slightly, her face the picture of contrition.

To onlookers, it was the epitome of sincerity.

Percival narrowed his eyes. "I don't need a sister."

With that, he prepared to leave with Vivienne.

"Mr. Ellington, are you still angry with me?" Gillian raised her voice slightly, drawing the attention of those around them.

Percival knew that if he did not respond now, it would be a slap in the face to the Ashford family in front of everyone.

But what of it?

Without uttering a word, he took Vivienne by the hand, and they made their way through the crowd, leaving Gillian behind.

Gillian had not expected Percival to snub her so completely, to not even put on a show of politeness.

She felt like a fool, left standing there while others snickered behind their hands.

Her affection for Percival had soured, transforming into something else.

She was determined to see just how long Percival could hold out.

"Ms. Ashford, don't bother with him. A man who doesn't appreciate your worth doesn't deserve your time," came a voice.

Startled, Gillian turned to find Yannick standing there, Mara's brother who had once pursued her as well.

She had had better prospects then and had not paid him much mind.

But now, wounded by Percival's dismissal, she was ready for some comfort, so she engaged Yannick in conversation.

"Yannick, you always understood me best," Gillian said, her eyes demurely cast down in a wounded

expression.

Percival tapped his earpiece, which was barely visible, and said, "Husky, report."

"We're closing in on the target," Leopold whistled casually, a coded signal for the special squad.

The whistle was meant for Thomas, who was lurking nearby, questioning whether to proceed with their plan.

Thomas responded with another whistle, signaling Leopold to hold his position.

Chapter 526

Grasping the situation, Percival stopped talking to Leopold, engaging in small talk with Vivienne as they mingled with the various attendees.

Before long, Patrick made his way over. "Mr. Ellington, I haven't had the chance to congratulate you two yet. My apologies."

"No need for formalities, Mr. Ashford," Percival replied nonchalantly.

There was an unspoken tension between the two men, a remembrance of an engagement party initially intended for Percival and Gillian.

After exchanging the obligatory business pleasantries, Patrick gestured towards the starboard side of the deck. "Mr. Ellington, since it's your first time here, why not take your lady to enjoy the view from the

deck? I can't boast much, but the scenery here is truly top-notch."

"Thank you for the suggestion, Mr. Ashford," Percival accepted graciously.

Patrick offered a wry smile, and with a discreet nod to Vivienne, he excused himself to attend to other guests.

Vivienne glanced towards the deck and tapped her earpiece. "Husky's lady, report in."

"Vivienne, I'm not Husky's lady. I'm a Samoyed, a Samoyed!" Griffin insisted repeatedly.

Samoyed was the code name Griffin had chosen for herself, also known as Angel Smile. She had insisted on having a handle to fit in with the rest.

"You two sure know how to name yourselves. Report your positions."

With a muted grunt, Griffin responded, "Starboard deck, nine o'clock position, and stern, three o'clock position, one 'Morning Glory' each. No other anomalies detected. No new explosives found. Stay sharp."

Vivienne nodded and exchanged a knowing look with Percival, and they both discreetly faded into the crowd.

In a lounge area, Yannick was engrossed in conversation with Gillian.

Yannick's eyes, sharp and calculating, roamed over Gillian, his desire increasingly evident.

"Gillian, when Grandma mentioned wanting to match you with Percival, I knew it was wrong. How could someone as cold as him ever deserve you?"

Gillian dodged Yannick's burning gaze, her faux modesty tinged with coyness. "I guess I'm to blame, too. I overestimated myself. I don't know why, but I always seem to give the wrong impression. Those people were really just my friends. I never expected that they would..."

"Don't worry, I understand," Yannick leaned closer to Gillian. "That crowd is even less worthy of you."

Internally scoffing at his words, Gillian thought, "You're the least worthy of all." However, she responded

with feigned shyness, "Do you really think that, Yannick?"

"Of course, you're perfect in my eyes."

As Gillian was about to reply, her phone vibrated with a message from Mara, asking her to meet at the stern of the ship.

Confused, as Mara had not been present earlier, Gillian excused herself to find her.

After Gillian left, Yannick surreptitiously sprinkled some powder into her drink, thinking, "A slut playing the innocent? Soon, you won't be able to keep up the act!"

At the stern, disguised as a crew member, Mara pulled Gillian aside to a secluded corner.

"Mara, what's this about?"

Without time to explain, Mara urgently asked, "Were you with Yannick?"

"Yes, he wanted to chat. Why?"

Mara groaned, "I knew that good-for-nothing was up to no good. He's planning to... to take advantage of you! He wants to get you pregnant with a Boyd baby so you'd have no choice but to marry him."

Gillian gasped, "How could he..."

"I overheard it. That's why I snuck on board, Gillian. You mustn't go anywhere with him."

Gillian paused, and then an idea sparked in her mind. "Mara, do you still want me to marry Percival?"

Even after all that's happened, would you still want that?"

Mara certainly did not, but she had no choice; securing the Ashford family assets was paramount. "Of course, you're my best friend."

Gillian smiled, relieved. "Then, Mara, I have a plan. Help me, and I assure you, by the end of tonight, I

will be Mrs. Ellington."

Mara was taken aback. "What's the plan?"

"Just follow me secretly. When you see Yannick taking me away, you..."

Hanging on the railing above, Vivienne overheard their entire scheme.

She almost wanted to hear more of such exciting plots. She had to admit that Gillian was rather quick-witted. It was a waste that she was not a writer.

She tapped her earpiece and said, "Mr. Wolf, you got all that? Sounds like a foolproof plan—catching a turtle in a jar!"

Everyone on the comm channel, Vivienne included, could hear each other clearly.

Leopold chuckled first. "Captain Wolf, sounds like Vivienne's calling you a turtle."

Percival's voice was surprisingly upbeat as he clinked a glass with someone. "Keep it up, and you're

headed to Fariana Isle after the mission."

"Come on, I was just kidding!" Leopold quickly backpedaled.

Fariana Isle was the last place anyone wanted to be.

Vivienne rappelled down a few more feet, saying, "Mr. Wolf, looks like you're in for a lucky night. Just don't embarrass me."

Percival's voice was stern. "Stop it. Stay safe."

Vivienne laughed softly. "You too."

Without waiting for an explanation, Mara grabbed Percival's arm and yanked him away.

Percival offered no resistance, allowing Mara to pull him towards the guest rooms.

"Bro, I just got a text from Gillian. She said she was chatting with Yannick and started feeling woozy, and then she just went out of contact. Thankfully, she sent me her room's location before she did.

We've got to save her!" New chapter available on Drqmanovels.com

Mara, visibly distressed, led Percival to the guest room area. "This is it, bro. Do you want to knock?"

Percival stood before the door, hearing faint cries from within, his expression darkening. "Why should I knock?"

Inside the room.

Gillian was pinned down on the bed by Yannick.

Yannick's hands, fueled by desire, had already left a series of purple bruises on her legs.

"What's the act for? You think I don't know how many guys you've been with, you slut? What's one more night to you?"

As he spoke, Yannick ripped at the straps of Gillian's dress, and his teeth sank into her soft shoulder, leaving a trail of bite marks.

Chapter 527

Gillian fought with every ounce of her strength, her mind desperately screaming.

"Mara, you fool, if you don't show up soon, Yannick is really going to defile me!"

Where on earth had Mara taken Percival to?

If Mara did not arrive shortly, the aromatherapy candle would burn down to the stash of drugs, and even she would not be able to control herself!

"Yannick, let me go! My dad is right outside. Aren't you afraid of getting caught?" Gillian clung desperately to her body, protecting her most vulnerable parts.

Yannick, driven mad with desire, paid no heed to such an impotent threat.

"Oh, how perfect, let your father witness just how slutty his daughter can be. With all the guests outside, you'll have no choice but to marry me, and you'll be Mrs. Boyd whether you like it or not!"

As Yannick spoke, he pinned Gillian's hands to the bed, his hands roaming her body to satisfy his vile
cravings.

When he first pursued Gillian, the belle of Sea City, he had been humiliated, and to this day, he was still
mocked by his circle of friends.

To make matters worse, in their efforts to arrange Gillian's marriage to Percival, the Boyd family had
stirred up trouble with Vivienne, a force to be reckoned with. They had been stripped of their dignity,
and his grandmother had even lost her hand, which had not been reattached yet!

And to add insult to injury, reattaching a hand and medical treatment for his grandmother's back would
cost a staggering 800 billion!

He thought the Boyd family had gone mad. Why spend so much on someone nearing the end of their
life?

But his opinion did not matter; he had to follow the family's plans.

Yet all this was because of Gillian, and today, he was determined to have her submit to him completely.

Gillian could not afford to care about dignity or propriety now. If Yannick had his way, she would be left
without a shred of hope.

"Help, somebody, help me! Please, anyone!"

Her cries for help seemed only to excite Yannick further, his movements becoming more forceful.

Finally, her pleas reached the ears of someone outside the door.

Percival, however, remained unmoved.

Knowing that Yannick could not be allowed to have his way with Gillian or the entire plan would be

ruined, Mara rushed to knock on the door, yelling, "Open the door! Yannick! Open the door! Percival is

here, you animal! Let go of Gillian!"

Hearing Mara's voice, Gillian was finally relieved. Had Mara come later, she might not be able to hold

on.

Mara kept knocking while Percival leaned casually against the wall, fiddling with his earpiece.

"Mr. Wolf, it's ungentlemanly to enjoy the show from the sidelines," Vivienne said as she secured the

ropes, holding tools in her hands, looking at the "Morning Glory" glued to the yacht.

This particular setup would not blow the entire ship to pieces, just enough to damage the stern

significantly.

But it was sufficient to cause a malfunction, and coupled with an explosion at the bow deck, it would leave the vessel rudderless, with a compromised hull.

The end would be as romantic and heroic as the Titanic's demise.

Vivienne's mind played the iconic line, "You jump, I jump," an exquisitely beautiful declaration of love.

She imagined herself and Percival on the ship's bow, spreading their wings to fly, and could not help but chuckle at the thought.

Percival knocked on his earpiece with a code: Vivienne, stay focused and stay safe.

"These little bombs are just the beginning," Vivienne muttered, banishing the distracting thoughts from her mind.

If she and Mr. Wolf had been on Titanic, they would have ensured their story did not end in regret but was imbued with eternal grace.

Vivienne finished setting the last of the "Morning Glory," removed the rope anchors, and climbed back onto the deck.

Meanwhile...

Anna had also completed her task, standing triumphantly on the deck.

"Captain Wolf, mission complete. No trace of new explosives found."

Percival tapped his earpiece and then felt a faint vibration from the detector in his pocket.

He paused and looked at the device, which had gone silent again.

Scanning the area, the most likely location was, surprisingly, Gillian's stateroom.

His eyes darkening, he kicked Gillian's door in, sending Yannick, who had been about to confront the intruder, sprawling to the floor.

Yannick spat out blood, lunging at Percival, "Damn you, you've ruined my good time!"

Percival had no time for a brawl, landing a punch squarely on Yannick's nose, knocking him out cold.

"Mr. Ellington, you've finally come... If you had not, I would have..." Gillian sat on the bed, draping the sheets around her, partially concealing her bruised body.

She was a picture of both vulnerability and inadvertent seduction.

Percival did not spare her a glance, scouring the room.

Mara and Gillian were puzzled by his actions and clueless about what he was after.

Gillian signaled Mara with her eyes, indicating that she should drag the unconscious Yannick out.

Mara nodded, grabbed Yannick by the leg, and hauled him out, closing the door behind her.

Percival had broken the lock with his kick, meaning no one would need to break it down later.

The scene would be even more shocking.

Mara kicked Yannick in disgust. "Looks like a monkey but heavy as a pig!"

Nonetheless, this would do as well. Mara dragged Yannick away, buying a bit more time.

Back in the room, Gillian knelt on the bed, her once modest gown lying on the floor. Her legs bore the marks of Yannick's rough handling, a pitiful sight.

Yet, an underlying hint of something darker stirred the most primal desires.

Percival's gaze deepened as he looked at the bed beneath Gillian. It was the only place left unsearched.

He stepped forward and lifted the blanket. Updated at Dramanovels.com

Gillian's heart leaped with joy, and she instantly released her grip, collapsing onto the bed and filling the air with an irresistible aroma.

The scent in the room was warm and enveloping, flushing Gillian's cheeks an even deeper shade of pink.

"Mr. Ellington..."

Patrick froze for a second, but no matter how furious he was, this was his darling daughter. He hurried toward the guest wing.

The rest of the crowd, eager for the drama, surged towards the commotion like a tidal wave.

Patrick had just arrived when he saw a figure flying out and crashing against the wall.

Squinting, he realized it was Gillian!

"Gillian!" He exclaimed, racing to her side.

Chapter 528

Gillian was teetering on the brink of reason. The potency of the drugged aroma filling the room was enough to trigger tsunamis of the mind with a mere whiff.

With a fevered motion, Gillian kicked off the blankets wrapped around her, tugging at Patrick's sleeve with a hazy consciousness. "It's so hot, so incredibly hot."

Her stunning figure was on full display, leaving nothing to the imagination of the onlookers.

From a distance, Vivienne and Anna stood side by side, watching the scene unfold.

"Damn, she's got a killer body," Vivienne remarked, her eyes then shifting to Anna's less curvaceous

form. "Ah, well."

Anna blushed. "Ms. Vivienne, please, behave yourself!"

"Girl, I didn't even say anything. Why are you turning red?" Vivienne teased, playfully tilting Anna's chin.

Anna stepped back, quickly tapping into Percival's comms, "Captain Wolf, where are you?"

Percival clipped the last yellow wire, a bead of sweat rolling down his temple. "Get over here. I've found the new bomb."

Vivienne and Anna's expressions darkened, the jesting gone in an instant. They fought through the crowd and burst into the guest room.

By then, Patrick had knocked Gillian out and re-wrapped her in the blankets.

He was utterly clueless about what was happening!

Mara was equally bewildered. What on earth was going on?

Why had Gillian been thrown out, and what were Vivienne and that waiter doing going back in?

Was Gillian not supposed to be drugged with Percival by now, having...

Back in the room, Percival examined the new bomb, now defused in his hands.

Vivienne approached, her expression relaxing.

This undetonated bomb was a major breakthrough – it would save them a fortune and a ton of effort!

The development of this new bomb and the detector had been burning through cash like water.

Even with the backing of the Perez family, Vivienne could not just stay entirely out of it and not pay a penny, and she had spent a fortune.

But now, with this prototype in hand, there was no need to keep dissecting bomb structures. They could just program the design into the detector!

"Mr. Wolf, you're amazing!" Vivienne handed the bomb to Anna, then flung herself into Percival's arms, planting several firm kisses on his face.

Oh, the money – rosy-cheeked and lovely!

A visibly relieved Percival managed a smile, ruffling Vivienne's hair affectionately, "This reward alone isn't enough."

Vivienne hopped onto Percival, wrapping her legs around his waist, her forehead pressed against his, her voice laced with mischief. "Is this reward enough?"

Percival, carrying Vivienne's weight, swallowed hard. His Adam's apple bobbed.

This woman was pushing him to his limits.

If this kept up, he might be unable to hold back any longer.

Anna, on the sidelines, wished she could vanish into thin air.

Were these two really starting to get affectionate, regardless of where they were?

Could they spare a thought for her and the bewildered spectators outside the door?

Anna quietly stashed the bomb away, clearing her throat before saying, "Ms. Vivienne, Mr. Ellington..."

Percival acted as if he had not heard her, his voice deep, "Vivienne, the timing isn't right."

Vivienne kept her gaze locked on Percival, her words dropping deliberately. "All I'm asking is for you to

carry me out like this. How can the timing be wrong?"

Speechless, Percival knew he was teased again!

Suppressing a grin, Vivienne found Percival's fleeting blush endearing, thinking how adorable her Mr.

Wolf was.

Anna sighed internally, reminding them again, "Ms. Vivienne, Mr. Ellington, that's enough."

Vivienne finally let Percival go, gracefully dismounting and standing by his side.

Only then did she notice the crowd that had gathered.

Patrick was at the forefront, his expression beyond shock – it was sheer horror.

Vivienne linked her arm with Percival's, her gaze sharp as she addressed Patrick, "Mr. Ashford, are you enjoying the show?"

Patrick snapped back to reality, frowning as he stepped forward, surveying the chaotic scene that hinted at his daughter's recent ordeal.

"Mr. Ellington, Mara said you saved Gillian, but what happened between you two? She mentioned that my daughter's clothes were still on when she was thrown out of the room!"

Patrick's question lacked any underlying emotion - a father purely concerned for his daughter's well-being, regardless of Vivienne's presence.

Percival's gaze was icy as he faced the visibly upset Patrick. "If you want to know what happened, ask your daughter!"

Patrick bore into Percival with gritted teeth. "She's passed out now. If you don't explain yourself, not even Richard's presence will earn you any leniency from me!"

The onlookers, who had initially thought Percival played the hero, began to doubt his intentions. His demeanor did not suggest a rescuer but someone who had humiliated another.

Yawning nonchalantly, Vivienne interjected. "Did Gillian die or something, Mr. Ashford? Can't you wait for her to wake up?"

Patrick's face stiffened; he wanted to say something, but as his gaze fell upon Vivienne's nonchalant demeanor, the words of reproach died on his lips.

Gillian was currently propped up by Mara, who, noticing all eyes on her, hastily said, "Yannick drugged her. Even if she wakes up, we won't get anything out of her. Besides, she's still out of it. Percival, we should really get Gillian to the hospital fast." Read at Dramanovels.com

From the sidelines, Anna chuckled. "Miss, Gillian's daddy's right here. Who are you calling for?"

Vivienne could not help but join in with a laugh. "Aren't you a waitress too?"

Mara was taken aback. What was Vivienne implying? Pretending not to recognize her?

"There's no need for that!" Percival shot Anna a knowing look.

Anna nodded subtly, twisting her wrist, and a slender silver needle appeared between her fingers.

She moved towards the unconscious Gillian and, with a swift motion, pressed her palm against Gillian's

back.

Chapter 529

Gillian's scream pierced the silence of the night, startling her from her dreams into a gasping reality as she fell to her knees on the floor, breath heaving in her chest.

"Mr. Ellington, Mr. Ellington..." She gasped.

Patrick rushed to his daughter's side, steadying her with a firm grip. "Gillian, are you alright?" He asked, concern written all over his face.

Confusion clouded Gillian's eyes as she noticed the cluster of people around her, her last memory of being tucked into bed by Percival, wrapped in a cozy comforter.

She was quick to react, though, sobbing as she collapsed into her father's arms. "Dad, I... with Mr. Ellington, we've already... We've..."

Her words hung in the air, leaving an unspoken understanding among the gathered crowd.

The sight of a naked beauty would test any man's resolve, and poor Yannick had been dealt a rough hand, his legacy usurped by another.

A flicker of rage crossed Patrick's eyes as he turned to Percival, his voice rising in anger. "Percival,

what do you have to say for yourself? You animal!"

Mara quickly came to the defense. "Mr. Patrick, there were drugs in the room. It was not intentional; it

was the drugs that took control. Just think about how Gillian was acting!"

Gillian clung to her father's hand. "Dad, I remember bits and pieces. Mr. Ellington saved me from

Yannick. We tried to leave, but... I smelled something strange. Even though my mind was clear, our

bodies would not listen...

It's not Mr. Ellington's fault. It's all Yannick's doing. Really, it's not his fault."

Tears streamed down Gillian's face as she clutched the blanket. "Dad, I'm so ashamed."

Mara, with tears in her eyes, looked at Percival. "Bro, it was Gillian's first time. You can't just abandon

her."

Patrick was at a loss, torn between anger and the need to comfort his daughter. He looked at Percival

with a mixture of anger and pleading. "Mr. Ellington, given the circumstances, if you don't take

responsibility, Gillian will have no future."

"Yeah, Percival, we can't just leave things like this."

Their performance could have outshone even the likes of Meryl Streep and Anthony Hopkins.

Vivienne smirked. "Ms. Ashford, ever heard of Rainbow Entertainment? If you're interested in signing, I'll have someone contact you."

A talent like Gillian's could not be wasted. She could cry on cue, immerse herself in the role—who would not be enticed?

Gillian was a money-making machine, not just a drama queen.

Percival: "Vivienne, just how broke are you?"

Vivienne: "Utterly, completely, and absolutely broke!"

Leopold: "You should ask Vivienne how much she loves money."

Vivienne: "Utterly, completely, and absolutely in love with money!"

Gillian wiped away her tears. "Ms. Hawthorn, what are you implying?"

"Hard of hearing at such a young age? Need me to give you another shot?" Vivienne's lips curled in amusement as she watched Gillian.

A flash of anger passed through Gillian's eyes. "Vivienne! I know you're upset about me and Mr.

Ellington, but I would never lie about my reputation. I remember what happened, and there's no need to

frame Mr. Ellington or ruin your relationship!"

Vivienne nodded, then turned to Mara. "Are you absolutely sure what Gillian is saying is true?"

Mara, though nervous, knew she could not change her story now and nodded in affirmation.

"Yes, I believe Gillian. And it's true, Percival was the only one there. Now that Gillian's awake, there's no way she's lying."

Vivienne nodded again. "I see! Well, I have something interesting here. Care to take a look?"

With that, Vivienne signaled with her hand, and Anna handed her a sleek tablet that was not available on the market, foldable to the size of a smartphone.

The crowd was baffled, having no idea where the tablet had come from.

Vivienne tapped the screen a few times, and soon, a high-definition video began to play.

"Just send Yannick away, and I'll place the hallucinogenic drugs in the room. Once I've had my way with Mr. Ellington, we can blame it on Yannick. All you need to do is bring my dad and the others over, okay?"

"Sure, I'll help you. Just to get that Vivienne out of the way and ensure you marry Percival. Be careful,

Gillian!"

The video captured every detail of Gillian and Mara's conversation, even filtering out the background noise so every word was crystal clear.

Neither Gillian nor Mara could have anticipated that their private exchange would be recorded so vividly.

Patrick, who had been ready to confront Percival with righteous indignation, now felt the weight of shame. His daughter had drugged a man to offer herself to him?

The Ashford family's reputation would be tarnished for generations!

In the crowd, Teresa and Theodore breathed a sigh of relief. They had been present from the start of Yannick's troubles but had kept out of sight, fearful of Patrick's wrath.

Now, they saw a chance for a counterattack, perhaps even to implicate Gillian instead of Yannick.

After all, no one saw if Yannick had drugged Gillian or not. Thus, they could totally say that Gillian and Mara were deliberately ruining Yannick's reputation.

As for Percival and Vivienne, it looked like their chance for revenge would have to wait.

For now, the priority was to save Yannick.

Teresa rolled up her sleeves and pushed her way through the crowd, ready to defend her son.

"Seriously, you two little sluts, framing my boy like that!" Teresa fumed, her voice a tempest of maternal fury. "I knew there was no way he'd just pass out for no reason. You're scared of getting caught, so you knock him out? Well, let's see how you like a taste of your own medicine!"

With a lioness's fury, Teresa lunged at Gillian and Mara, her hands entangling in their hair like claws.

They were both still reeling in confusion when the sharp pain snapped them to the harsh reality. There was no time to react.

Teresa was frighteningly strong, and she threw them to the ground without breaking a sweat.

Gillian, in particular, was at a disadvantage, and now she lay exposed and defenseless as Teresa pinned her down and slapped her repeatedly.

Patrick wanted to intervene, but his body was frozen in shock.

His eyes darted to Vivienne in horror.

He knew—all of this was a trap set by Vivienne!

She sidled up to him, whispering in a voice only they could hear, "I told you, if Gillian stopped bothering

me, I would not go after her."

Resigned to his fate, Patrick closed his eyes.

Vivienne was as ruthless as his boss. Once she took action, she left no room for survival.

All he could do was silently pray that Gillian would come out of this unscathed... Otherwise...

Gillian and Mara were still under Teresa's relentless assault, their faces swelling and bruising under her blows.

She had to ensure Gillian left tonight utterly disgraced so no one would consider marrying her.

"Madam, this whole mess is the Ashford family's fault. Could you maybe... go easy on them for Boss's sake?" Patrick attempted to intercede.

But Vivienne cut him off before he could finish.

One wrong move and one would be dashed to pieces!

Chapter 530

Patrick's limbs were beyond his control, his body betraying him as he followed Vivienne's retreating steps.

Behind him, Gillian's heart-wrenching cries for her father echoed through the air, but he was powerless to respond.

Patrick finally felt the command of his body returned when they reached a secluded cabin on the ship.

But now, with both Percival and Anna guarding the door, escape was an impossibility.

"Kneel," Vivienne commanded, her voice serene as she sat on the seat representing authority.

Patrick fell to his knees with a thud, not out of compulsion but from the sheer force of Vivienne's presence.

His legs tingled with numbness, sharp pains shooting through his knees as if a thousand needles were pricking them.

Beads of sweat formed on his brow, trickling down his temples and disappearing onto his shoulders.

Vivienne sat with her legs crossed, her slender neck held high with disdain, a hint of scorn in her gaze.

As Patrick knelt, Vivienne wondered what her mother had seen in him. How could such a spineless man be entrusted with the critical technology of bionics?

She regarded him with contempt and curiosity, slowly pulling the small "Morning Glory" from her pocket and tossing it at Patrick.

Instinctively, he caught it, his forehead bulging with veins, paralyzed with fear.

When he saw what it was, he finally heaved a sigh of relief.

He had thought she had thrown a knife at him!

"Madam, what is this?" he stammered.

Vivienne raised an eyebrow, her voice calm. "A miniature bomb."

Shocked to his core, Patrick scrambled behind the couch for cover.

He thought it was a knife, but it was even worse - a bomb! Vivienne was more reckless than his boss.

Who in their right mind tosses a bomb around like a toy?

Observing Patrick's reaction, Vivienne could almost be certain of his innocence regarding the bomb incident that evening.

"It was found on your ship," she stated, her legs shifting position as she lounged back on the sofa, lazily eyeing Patrick.

Patrick crawled back towards her, panting, "Madam, I swear I had no idea about this. Even if we set aside your presence on the ship, my daughter and I were there, too. I would never risk our lives by planting a bomb. This has nothing to do with me."

"I know," Vivienne murmured absentmindedly, frowning slightly.

Patrick exhaled in relief and began to rise, "Could this be connected to the Boyd family?"

Vivienne's gaze sharpened as she looked at him. "You know something?"

"No, no, I just find it odd. After the engagement party fiasco, I cut all ties with the Boyd family. But for the sake of the bionic tech, I could not completely sever our relationship. I thought of sending an invite, and the Boyd family's head came to me before I could.

He wanted to apologize, claiming their matriarch was indisposed and that he would represent her. I agreed, and during preparations yesterday, my men told me the Boyd family's head wanted to drop off a floral arrangement. I did not question it, but it's suspicious now that I think about it. I had always dealt with Eliza, not the head of the Boyd family."

Vivienne nodded, then a signal beeped in her earpiece—it was from Leopold.

The shipment had arrived.

At the same time, Patrick's phone buzzed with a message. He wanted to check it but could not do so in front of Vivienne, so he remained kneeling silently.

Vivienne yawned, her eyes closing. "Let me think."

With that, she went silent.

Patrick dared not to move. He knew Vivienne was not dozing off but contemplating his fate.

The matter of the bomb had touched a nerve, and his pale excuses and baseless suspicions held little weight.

Patrick grew increasingly anxious as his phone continued to vibrate in his pocket.

If the shipment had arrived, just deliver it.

Why bother messaging him?

Meanwhile, Percival and Anna had left their post outside the cabin and were now at the Sea City harbor.

Leopold and Thomas had secured the docks, sealing off all incoming shipments and detaining the dockworkers.

"Percival, we found it—it's Keco," Thomas reported, handing over a bag of what seemed to be flour.

Keco, a notorious new drug on the black market, identical to flour and often sold alongside grains to avoid detection.

Percival's brow furrowed. "How much?"

Thomas exchanged a glance with Leopold before revealing an astonishing figure.

"Three tons."

Anna gasped. "How much?"

"Three tons," Thomas repeated.

Three tons of Keco could profit enough to buy a small country.

Percival had anticipated a significant haul but had not imagined it would be this colossal.

"But other than Keco, we've found nothing else," Thomas added.

Percival had come to Sea City to uncover GTO's virus research base, following leads to the Ashford

family's harbor, expecting a shipment for virus experimental substances.

This was their chance to breach the base, so Leopold and Thomas had been on watch early.

Percival and Vivienne kept their eyes on Patrick's movements from the ship's cabin; each of his moves

was a potential key to unraveling the web of intrigue surrounding them.

To their surprise, and instead of securing the experimental substance, they had stumbled upon a

whopping three tons of Keco.

Patrick, of all people, was neck-deep in drug trafficking, a kingpin no less.

Tracing the experimental substance was a dead end by now. Three tons of Keco was no small find, and it demanded the intervention of the local Drug Enforcement Agency.

"Pack up the gear and coordinate with the DEA officers," Percival instructed as he took the Keco bag.

"And keep this under wraps; we don't need the HQ swooping in."

Onboard, Vivienne opened her eyes as the signal came through, a sly smile curling on her lips as she watched Patrick before her.

"Anything else you want to say to me?" Vivienne inquired.

Vivienne could not help but laugh at his emphatic words.

Well, now was not the time yet. Content belongs to Dramanovels.com

She stood up and picked up the bomb in front of Patrick, saying to Patrick, "Just control your daughter.

That's all you need to do."

With that, Vivienne walked towards the door.

Patrick exhaled slowly, but before he could relax, he heard Vivienne's parting words—"My mother's debt is settled today."

Before Patrick could comprehend the meaning behind Vivienne's words, Vivienne had vanished.

Sinking into the couch, he wiped the sweat from his brow, his mind racing. Disregarding Vivienne's mysterious words, he grabbed his phone and called the dock.

"What's with all the calls? If the goods have arrived, just deliver them pronto. This shipment is critical; we can't afford any mistakes!"

Patrick cursed, leaning back to catch his breath.

Patrick nearly choked. "What did you say?"

Three tons of drugs was more than enough to cost his head!