

Million-Dollar 531

Chapter 531

Vivienne stepped out of the cabin, the last of the party-goers having trickled away into the night. The ocean breeze wrapped around her, a welcome silence after the evening's festivities.

Before long, the thrumming of helicopter blades sliced through the calm. Percival leaned halfway out of the chopper, his hand outstretched, grinning, "Vivienne, time to head home."

Back at the villa, it was not long before Thomas and Griffin returned from their outings.

Leopold's gaze was fixed on Thomas like a hawk on its prey. "I sent you to call the cops. How'd you end up bringing Griffin back with you?"

Thomas nonchalantly twisted open a bottle of soda, "Just gave her a lift on the way back. What's the big deal?"

"What way back? Don't act like you know Sea City better just because you've been here a few days longer. I lived here as a kid and even once stayed with the Martinez family. You were nowhere near on the way!"

Leopold's eyes narrowed, his tone sharp, demanding to know why Thomas returned with Griffin.

Thomas was itching to throw a punch. Why did lovebirds have to be so annoying?

On the other hand, Griffin was too absorbed in her work to engage with such trivialities. She could have a dozen Leopolds buzzing around her and not bat an eye.

"Vivienne, I found it. It's from my latest batch of 'Morning Glory'. Only I have access to these bombs, each with a serial number. This one is from the new batch."

After securing the disassembled 'Morning Glory' from the yacht, Griffin had discreetly disembarked to investigate at the Martinez family's weapons research facility in Sea City.

The tests and serial number comparison confirmed it was indeed a 'Morning Glory' recently shipped to the Vanguard Agency headquarters.

Vivienne had her suspicions, but the brazenness of the traitor within – to use a bomb just delivered to the Vanguard Agency – was shocking. Were they so unafraid of exposure, or did Micah and Percival's control over the Rivenwood Vanguard Agency hit a nerve?

"Who authorized to receive these bombs?" Percival inquired.

Griffin pressed her lips together. "Vance Edwards, the second in command at the Sea City Vanguard Agency."

The name was not unfamiliar to Vivienne or Percival.

Vance, the deputy head of the Sea City Vanguard Agency, had been transferred from Rivenwood eight years prior. He remained elusive, always out on missions, until he secretly returned to Sea City to take the reins earlier this year.

The operation in the West District was under Vance's command as the chief of Sea City.

Moreover, he had an intriguing identity.

He was the father of Darren and Ashley Edwards, the husband of Melissa Brooks, and the patriarch of the Edwards family, known for his extensive business travels.

Vivienne had not expected Vance to be part of the Vanguard Agency; clearly, neither had Percival.

Vance ranked several levels above Micah, and Percival did not have the clearance to investigate further.

"What's Vance's code name in the Vanguard Agency?" Vivienne asked.

Griffin shook her head. "I don't know that. If not for needing a direct superior's signature, I would not even know the name Vance. But I've heard rumors about him and Micah vying for a spot at

headquarters. Apparently, Vance got there first thanks to family connections, and Micah's failed mission

back then kept him in Rivenwood."

Percival had heard such rumors, too.

"Boss did want to move up, but at the time, we did not know who we were up against," he confirmed.

The failed mission and Karen's disappearance had driven Micah to climb the ranks, with the headquarters being the most strategic move. Otherwise, he would be confined to Rivenwood's limitations.

Unfortunately, Micah did not make it.

After securing a spot at headquarters and staying under the radar for years, Vance reemerged as a commissioner, a testament to his impressive record.

Vivienne issued an Order of Nine Mystics Society, demanding every detail of Vance's life over the years, down to his waking hours.

Vance had requested an alarming number of 'Morning Glory' bombs from Griffin, and it was uncertain how many were still unaccounted for. They had to act fast to avert danger.

And then there was today's incident with the new type of bomb on the yacht.

Vivienne had her people stationed around the yacht, yet someone had managed to sneak both the 'Morning Glory' and the new bomb onboard—a testament to the enemy's meticulous planning.

"Griffin, here's the new bomb we secured from the scene. Take a look," Vivienne said, handing over the device.

Griffin was more than eager to delve into it. The theft of her designs and the subsequent struggle to understand the stolen tech had been a thorn in her side. Now, with the bomb in hand and the chance to improve upon it, she was positively giddy as she felt with the bomb.

Leopold was about to follow her when Percival's voice stopped him.

"Any trouble with the shipment before it docked?" Percival asked.

Leopold watched Griffin drive away, then slumped onto the couch with a sigh. "No, everything arrived on time. The ship's ID matched the records; the dockworkers all confirmed it."

"That means the goods were swapped out before they even loaded up," Vivienne mused, sprawled across Percival's lap, tearing open a bag of potato chips. "Looks like Patrick's been hung out to dry."

Percival snagged a chip from Vivienne's hand with his mouth. "Not necessarily. Could be a stalling tactic."

"Any word from Quincy?" Vivienne asked, eyes on Percival. She thought for a moment, then finished the half-eaten chip he left.

Percival's fingers tightened around her waist. "Nothing yet. We have to wait."

"Let's just go to bed, then. I'm beat," she mumbled, resting her chin against his chest, her eyes heavy with sleep.

Without another word, Percival scooped up Vivienne and carried her to the bedroom.

Back in the living room, three baffled faces remained.

Leopold scratched his head. "Wait, aren't we supposed to have a meeting?"

Thomas was speechless. He thought to himself that lovebirds really could be annoying.

But, of course, that was just an inner monologue.

Anna stood up, grabbing her backpack. "I'm off to bed too. Big day tomorrow."

Thomas followed suit, but Leopold grabbed him. "Hold on. About earlier, what way back?"

The villa was quiet that night, except for Thomas, who was a bit restless.

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At the Boyd mansion, Yannick was slowly coming to.

"That damn Percival, I'll make him pay for hitting me! And Gillian, that little slut, scheming against me!"

"You had it coming, letting your lower half do the thinking," Mara retorted, her face swollen from the beating, her anger now directed at Yannick.

Teresa naturally defended her son. "I haven't even started on you, and you're throwing a fit. You're lucky you weren't killed today!"

"Try hitting her again, I dare you!" Nancy shouted back.

"I told you to find the Specter Healer, and what have you done? A bunch of incompetents," Wendy scolded them each in turn.

Once the air had cleared a bit, she asked, "How's the 800 billion coming along?"

"Exactly, Hayden's still out there working on it. Don't worry, we're on it."

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Evening had settled when Eliza stepped into Wendy's room.

"Mom, why are you still up at this hour?" Eliza perched herself beside Wendy, the picture of a dutiful daughter.

Wendy cherished Eliza deeply, having protected her like the apple of her eye since she was a child.

Now, in her current state, she trusted no one more than Eliza.

“Eliza, with me in this condition, I would not put it past my daughters-in-law to have all sorts of ideas.

We can’t let them get the better of us, darling. Your brothers are no use either, only seeing dollar signs.”

Eliza nestled close to Wendy, chuckling softly. “Don’t worry, Mom. The Boyds won’t be played by my sisters-in-law. Our family’s assets won’t fall into the wrong hands, not on my watch.”

Wendy nodded in assurance. “I knew I could count on you to ease my worries. Eliza, I’ve taken note of your ambitions all those years and prepared for it. This visit from Percival, it’s so you can get acquainted with the Ellingtons, you understand?”

Relief washed over Eliza with those words.

As long as she could see Nathan Ellington again, she would do anything.

“Yeah, I know you’ve always got my back, Mom.” Eliza leaned on Wendy’s shoulder, briefly catching sight of her amputated hand and quickly averting her gaze with a hint of distaste.

Wendy’s hand was already skeletal, a ghastly sight, and with the stump so starkly exposed, it was downright macabre.

“Mom, what are your plans regarding the Specter Healer?” Eliza inquired.

Wendy scoffed. “He’s just after money, isn’t he? I have plenty, though it might be a bit tricky to come up with 800 billion dollars at once. But, opportunities are not nonexistent.”

Eliza looked at Wendy skeptically.

Plenty of money? What a joke.

As the CFO of Boyd Group, she was all too aware of how much the Boyd family had.

Not to mention 800 billion, even 800 million would require careful consideration.

Where was her mother getting this confidence from?

Noticing Eliza’s doubt, Wendy smiled. “Have you forgotten our ace in the hole?”

“Ace in the hole?” Eliza’s brow furrowed.

Wendy grabbed the remote and switched on the news channel where Patrick's arrest was being broadcast.

Details were scarce, only mentioning Patrick's apprehension. The screen also showed Gillian besieged by reporters.

It dawned on Eliza in an instant.

Wendy was plotting to seize control of the Ashford family's fortune, turning their empire into her personal treasury.

Indeed, 800 billion was more than feasible with the Ashford family's resources.

"Mom, how can you be so sure Patrick will turn to us for help?" Eliza asked.

Wendy looked smug. "The Ashford family is a hot potato right now. Who would dare get involved? And with Gillian's reputation in ruins, who would want her? But, just one call from you, inviting her to turn to the Boyds, bringing all Ashford business under our roof, and the money will follow."

Wendy was exploiting the crisis.

With Patrick in trouble, Gillian, as the sole Ashford heiress, would be desperate for connections to free her father.

But no one was a fool. With the gravity of Patrick's offenses unclear, who would lend a hand?

Should the Boyds be the only ones to extend help, Gillian would agree to any terms, however reluctant.

Thus securing the Ashford business and unveiling the Boyd family's clandestine commercial network.

"Alright, I'll make the call right away." Eliza smiled.

If they could snatch all the Ashford business, it would be about more than just 800 billion dollars.

This operation had to be kept secret from the other Boyds, or they would certainly want a piece of the action.

Eliza had to keep everything under her control to negotiate with the Ellingtons from a position of strength and to get closer to Nathan.

Becoming the Ellington family's next daughter-in-law was within reach.

"Cecilia, you just wait to be cast aside," She cursed inwardly.

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Meanwhile, the Ashford Mansion was in chaos. Gillian had barely processed Patrick's arrest when she was bombarded with calls from creditors.

To sustain such a large company and its numerous projects, Patrick had inevitably borrowed heavily from banks.

Now, with his arrest, the banks were aggressively seeking repayment.

Terrified, Gillian tossed her phone aside, clueless on how to proceed.

The friends who once flocked around her had vanished into thin air, leaving her utterly alone.

Then, the doorbell rang. Surprisingly, it was Eliza.

Gillian eyed her warily. "What are you doing here?"

Eliza smiled warmly. "Gillian, I came to see how you're holding up. Your dad and I go way back, and

I've watched you grow up. I could not just sit by while your family faces such troubles."

It was the most comforting thing Gillian had heard in a while, and tears sprung to her eyes.

"Auntie," Gillian rushed forward and embraced Eliza, sobbing.

She had been close to Mara and had grown up calling Eliza 'auntie' too.

Eliza offered a half-hearted smile and pulled Gillian to sit beside her. "Gillian, given the circumstances,

there's only one thing I can think of to help you, but I need your consent."

"Auntie, just tell me what to do. I'll follow your lead," Gillian said, entirely out of her depth with business

affairs. Having someone willing to help was the best thing she could hope for.

Gillian was lost in the fog. "Auntie, I don't really understand these company matters..."

Before she knew it, Gillian felt she was already wed to Percival.

Without further hesitation, she signed her name on the contract.

Meanwhile, at the Frostfire Intelligence Agency's account, 800 billion dollars was received.

Seeing the string of zeros after the eight, Vivienne excitedly slapped Percival on the shoulder. "Mr.

Wolf, I'm treating you to Wagyu beef tonight! My treat!"

Percival closed his tablet and glanced at Vivienne's phone. Read at Dramanovels.com

"800 billion, and all I get is a Wagyu beef?"

What do you do when your wife is a penny-pincher?

Vivienne protectively held her phone, wary. "Yes, just that. Take it or leave it!"

"I'll take it!" Percival said without hesitation.

He was not about to waste Vivienne's rare gesture of generosity.

...

At the Boyd Mansion, Eliza had everything arranged, and people were waiting.

Hayden pondered momentarily before asking, "Eliza, are you sure the Specter Healer agreed to treat

Mom for free?"

Eliza nodded affirmatively. "I gave him my shares, so of course, he agreed to the free treatment."

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Hayden was about to ask another question when Nancy cut him off.

“Eliza, Mom sure did not waste her affection on you. We're all in awe to think you'd give up your shares so selflessly. Don't worry, as long as there's bread on our table, there will be a seat for you,” Nancy praised with a hint of insincerity, masking her eagerness for Eliza to relinquish all her shares and get Wendy the medical attention she needed.

To Nancy, it mattered little if Wendy got better or not as long as Eliza did not get her hands on the money.

The second branch had always been treated like the stepchild, overshadowed by the prestigious first branch and Eliza, the darling with Wendy's favor. At least when Cecilia was around, she diverted some attention, but since she stopped visiting, the second branch had become even more neglected.

Now, with the family matriarch indisposed, Nancy had no intention of letting Hayden dip into the funds. Those were better saved for her own children.

Eliza merely smiled, keenly aware of Nancy's thoughts. But it did not matter. With the control of the Ashford family's wealth firmly in her grasp, once the Specter Healer cured her mother, and the Boyd family shares were hers, would both branches not have to dance to her tune?

After all, her ultimate goal was to use the Boyd and Ashford resources to obtain the Ellington Group.

As the butler wheeled out Wendy, the other Boyds settled on the couches, anxiously awaiting the Specter Healer's arrival.

Two hours ticked by with no sign of him, causing Theodore to grow impatient. "Eliza, is this guy reliable or what? Did you actually transfer the shares, or did he bail?"

"No, that can't be it," Eliza frowned, feeling a stir of doubt, too. She had wired an astronomical sum and arranged everything with the Frostfire Intelligence Agency. The Specter Healer had no reason to stand them up.

"Eliza, show me the transfer papers. Don't tell me you've been conned," Teresa eyed her suspiciously.

Eliza cleared her throat. "Teresa, the Specter Healer is a man of his word. Perhaps he's just running late due to some inconvenience of his old age. Don't worry."

"I just don't want you to be..."

"Enough. You weren't this concerned when it was time to fork the money. Eliza's no fool. Everyone zip it." Wendy cut Teresa off mid-sentence.

Just then, the Boyd family's front door swung open, and the butler rushed to greet the new arrival. A

collective sigh of relief filled the room – the Specter Healer had finally come.

But their expressions went from surprise to disappointment when they saw who it was.

“Why are you here?” Eliza asked in astonishment.

Vivienne, arm in arm with Percival, holding a bag, smirked. “Didn’t you invite me?”

Still fuming over Vivienne's actions aboard the yacht, Mara scowled at her, her bruised face aching even more from the expression.

“Vivienne, don’t flatter yourself. We would not invite you here. You’re bad luck. Because of you, my grandma got hurt. Get out!” Mara spat.

Yannick, harboring his own grudge, lashed out too, “Percival, this is the Boyd Mansion. Leave!”

Wendy had no patience for them either. “Percival, the Boyds have important matters today. Please leave, and we'll discuss future issues later. I’ll have a word with your mother.”

Vivienne raised an eyebrow, “Are you sure you want me to go?”

Eliza, still wanting to make a good impression on Percival, intervened, “Percival, please take Ms.

Hawthorn and leave. Today is really not the best time; we have a distinguished guest. It’s not good for

you to see us like this.”

Percival hugged Vivienne, fingers tracing her silhouette, reluctantly letting go. “Vivienne, it seems like my grandmother doesn’t need the Specter Healer’s services after all,” he said.

The Boyd family members were taken aback and confused.

How did Percival know about the Specter Healer and that he was supposed to treat Wendy tonight?

Vivienne’s smile deepened as she placed her bag on the floor and spoke seriously, “You’ve paid a fortune for my services. No refunds if you refuse treatment.”

The Boyds were stunned, and then Huxley piped up. “You’re the Specter Healer?”

Vivienne nodded, somewhat surprised that the quietest member of the family had caught on so quickly.

A moment of silence followed, then the room erupted in laughter.

“What nonsense are you talking, Vivienne?”

Margot was nearly doubled over. “You, the Specter Healer? I suggest you get your head checked. If you’re the Specter Healer, then I’m Merlin himself!”

Vivienne opened her bag, revealing an array of medical tools. With a simple gesture, Margot started coughing uncontrollably.

"What the... wait, my voice... Oh no, my hair!"

At that moment, Margot hardly resembled an ordinary girl; she looked more like a grumpy old man!

Vivienne chuckled, "Didn't you say you were Merlin himself? I'm just making your dreams come true!"

The laughter died quickly in the Boyd household as everyone stared at Vivienne with shock and horror.

Could it be that she was actually the Specter Healer?

Eliza hastily grabbed her smartphone and dialed the head of the Frostfire Intelligence Agency. "Hello, I

was wondering, has the Specter Healer arrived?"

"Yes, her name is Vivienne Hawthorn. You should know her."

The call was on speaker, and the faces of the Boyd family members turned ghostly pale.

Their eyes nearly bulged out of their sockets.

Never in their wildest dreams had they imagined that Vivienne, of all people, was the Specter Healer!

How could it be her?

Was she not the girl who grew up in that quaint little countryside chapel, dabbling in perfume making,

jewelry design, fashion, and even hacking? With all those skills, how on earth did she master the art of

medicine – to a revered and almost mystical extent, no less?

How did she manage that?

Her unharmed hand trembling with terror, Wendy looked at Vivienne in shock. "How... how could you

possibly reattach my hand? Are you trying to kill me?"

She was the epitome of honor; taking money meant getting the job done.

Wendy was speechless.

"Yeah, right, like I'd believe that!" She thought.

Wendy thought about fleeing, but how could she, confined to her wheelchair?

Eliza and the others did not dare to come any closer.

This was Vivienne, the woman who could chop off a hand without flinching. Who would dare to

interfere?

Vivienne took Wendy's hand, and in just half an hour, it was reattached to her wrist.

"Don't lift anything heavy for three days, and find me in five days to remove the stitches."

Vivienne packed up her tools. Reattaching a hand was too easy.

The 800 billion was well earned. Read at Dramanovels.com

Eliza swallowed hard. "Are you sure it's properly done?"

Vivienne nodded confidently. "What do you think?"

That finally snapped Teresa and the others out of their shock.

"Eliza, where did you get 800 billion dollars? Didn't you say you gave your shares to the Specter

Healer?"

Percival casually dropped a bombshell, "All of the Ashford family's assets now belong to the Boyd

family, didn't you know?"

Nancy also turned on Wendy, demanding her share. "Everything belongs to your daughter? Why? You

greedy old bat, hand over the money now!"

In the ensuing struggle, the sound of bones cracking echoed once more.

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Wendy's withered hand was trampled beneath the feet of her sons and daughters-in-law, kicked around

as though it were a soccer ball.

Wendy was yanked from her wheelchair to the floor by Nancy, like a dying, desiccated old dog,

repeatedly jabbed by the pointed heel of Nancy's stiletto.

Vivienne said nothing.

Percival said nothing.

Such dutiful descendants Wendy had indeed!

"You useless old hag, I've tolerated you for far too long. Our side of the family has done the most; in the end, we're left with nothing. Your blatant favoritism for your daughter could make a saint rage, and now you still expect to charm us with a mere sliver of shares? Ptooeey!"

Eliza was no better off. Teresa had always been the most envious of the Ashford family's assets, and now that they were all in Eliza's hands, her resentment was even more palpable.

Thinking of the energy and the sacrifices her son had made for such meager gains only stoked

Teresa's fury, making her blows all the more vicious.

"You little vixen, I knew you were never as kindhearted as you pretended, flaunting your shares as bait.

You really overestimate yourself. If you don't cough up the Ashford family's funds today, I'll beat you to a pulp!"

Once greed infects the human heart, it ceases to be human at all.

Vivienne had seen her fair share of families torn apart by petty squabbles over inheritance; the Brooks

and the Ellingtons had succumbed to similar fates.

For the sake of money, they would abandon principles and kinship without a second thought.

The Boyds were no different, willing to tear each other apart over a fortune, treating their elderly

mother's hand as if it were nothing more than trash to be kicked around.

Sharp stilettos and ring-adorned fists became weapons in the battle for wealth.

Even without this fortune, such a family was destined to become a casualty of greed before long.

Percival draped his coat over Vivienne's shoulders and embraced her, steering her away from the Boyd

Mansion.

The Boyd family's reckoning was still to come.

After leaving the Boyd Mansion, Vivienne received a text from Matthew.

[Vivienne, Patrick's been bailed out.]

She pocketed her phone, "Wendy still has that kind of clout?"

Percival scoffed. "None of the Boyds do."

The Boyds were still reliant on the Ashfords to expand their business. With Patrick in such hot water,

the Boyds would be lucky to save their own skins, let alone bail him out.

What a joke.

Vivienne smiled subtly, her approval apparent. "The people my mother picked would always have some tricks up their sleeves."

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At the Ashford Mansion, Patrick, freshly dressed and invigorated with some medicine, finally stepped through the front door.

Terrified, Gillian flung herself at her father. "Dad, you're finally back. I was so scared, I thought you'd never return."

Patrick ruffled his daughter's hair. "Didn't I tell you I'd be gone for a bit and back soon? With my girl here, how could I not come back?"

"Right, my dad's the best," Gillian said, leading him to the couch. "Dad, I did everything you told me to.

But how did you know the Boyds would come to us for a deal?"

Though Gillian often played the airhead, yearning to be the darling of Sea City's elite bachelors, she was far from foolish. How else could she have wrapped so many around her finger?

The words Eliza had thrown at her were nothing but leftovers from Gillian's playbook.

It was clear to her that the contract was Eliza's attempt to monopolize the Ashford family's enterprises.

Wishing to capture the prey without hunting, how delusional.

But Patrick had made his instructions clear before the yacht gala: if the Ashfords were in trouble and the Boyds came sniffing around for an advantage, let them have it. Gillian was to simply play along and sign the deal.

So, when Eliza approached, Gillian feigned panic and, under Eliza's guidance, signed the contract.

Patrick chuckled. "Those greedy dogs in the Boyd family would not miss a chance to gnaw on a bone.

But they should check if they've got the teeth for it. Gillian, once I swallow up the Boyd Group, we'll reach out to the Ellingtons, and you'll marry into their family, alright?"

Gillian snuggled against Patrick's shoulder. "I knew you'd always look out for me, Dad. I'll listen to you from now on and stop making foolish mistakes."

"I have only one daughter, and I won't let you suffer. But remember, never act on your own. Marrying

Percival won't be easy; we must play our cards right."

Patrick's gaze grew more profound, his murky eyes harboring a strange light, betraying his deep thoughts.

Lost in her fantasies, Gillian missed her father's subtle shift.

Patrick's release made headlines, and he quickly called a press conference to clear the air.

I, Patrick, swear again that neither I nor the Ashford Group will engage in any unlawful activities. We are committed to being law-abiding citizens. Thank you, everyone."

Patrick's impassioned speech quickly spread across the internet through live streams and media coverage, effectively severing his association with the three-ton Keco that had been looming over his head.

After the press conference, Patrick stepped down from the stage and went to the lounge at the back.

No sooner had he closed the door than a woman dressed as a reporter entered, conspicuously without a camera or microphone.

Collapsing onto the couch, Patrick loosened his tie and did not seem surprised by the visitor.

"Well, that was quite the heart-stirring speech, Mr. Ashford," the 'reporter' said, perching opposite Patrick with a sly grin.

Patrick half-opened his eyes, giving the woman a sidelong glance before chuckling. "F-Poison sent you?" Content belongs to Dramanovels.com

"Yes." The woman narrowed her eyes and ripped off the press badge hanging around her neck, casually tossing it onto the table. "You can call me Quincy."

Patrick straightened up. "Weird name for a pretty girl. What's the word from F-Poison?"

To any onlooker, she might have seemed amiable enough.

But to Patrick, her words were like an iceberg passing through, making him straighten up involuntarily.

"Mr. Ashford, if your daughter had not meddled, Percival might already be dead," Quincy said, eyes narrowing as she gave Patrick a frosty look.

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Patrick was floored by the girl before him, his words catching in his throat as he fell silent.

Quincy did not bother with further conversation. Grabbing her press pass from the table, she stood up and left.

Patrick tugged at his tie, exhaling a long breath of relief.

Dealing with the devil always comes at a price, he mused.

After leaving Patrick's press conference, Quincy took a shortcut and emerged transformed, her professional aura all but gone.

Dressed in a tank top with overalls and sporting a baseball cap, she slung a canvas bag over her shoulder, the picture of a college student.

She waited at the crossroads until a nondescript black Volkswagen pulled up.

"Are you my Uber?" Quincy asked.

The driver poked his head out, sunglasses masking his eyes. "Yeah, hop in, sweetheart."

Quincy smiled and opened the door. Soon, the Volkswagen blended into the stream of city traffic.

"Captain Wolf, can't you guys get me a better ride next time? This one just doesn't suit my style,"

Leopold grumbled from the driver's seat, resting one hand on the steering wheel and the other on the door.

Percival, seated in the passenger seat, turned his head slightly, disregarding Husky's complaints.

In the backseat, Quincy tipped her cap to greet Vivienne. "Long time no see."

"You've gotten taller." Vivienne smiled back.

They skipped the small talk, diving straight into the heart of the matter.

"Ever since the operation to take down Mark ended, I've been out of the loop, just lying low in Rivenwood. After the lab was blown up by someone named Willa, I got zero instructions. It was not until yesterday that I was suddenly told to come to Sea City and give Patrick his next assignment."

Vivienne nodded. "Have you met the big boss?"

"Nope, all I know is that the boss goes by F-Poison. The orders come through online messages. I've tried tracking him, but there's nothing to trace." Quincy pulled out her phone and showed a forum post from F-Poison detailing the assignment.

Vivienne tried to trace the source on her laptop but hit a dead end.

"Their old network's been beefed up since our mentor's days. We can't track it with what we've got,"

Percival said, looking back at them.

Karen had indeed left behind a backdoor, but after all these years, GTO had upped their game. Plus, the original backdoor was locked away at Vanguard Agency headquarters, probably already compromised by the traitor.

Breaking into GTO's internal network was a pipe dream now.

Vivienne sighed, burdened by the thought of having such a clever mother.

Quincy pocketed her phone. "As for the bomb on the ship, I was out of the loop. That was another team under F-Poison."

"Another team?"

"That's right," Quincy confirmed. "After Mr. B, namely Belle, was captured, I thought F-Poison would activate us, the underlings, but it never happened, and the operations kept running smoothly. This leads me to believe Mr. B was not the real second-in-command or that others at her level are still out there."

"So, you're saying F-Poison has more than one so-called second-in-command like Belle?" Leopold queried.

"Exactly. Like the bomb incident—handled by her deputy in Sea City. I've yet to figure out who that is,"

Quincy said, which aligned with Vivienne's suspicions.

Take Patrick, for instance. If it had not been for this trip to Sea City and the discovery of the bionic scandal, Vivienne would never have suspected him.

So, Belle was not GTO's second-in-command after all; she was just the regional head for Rivenwood.

But who was in charge of Sea City?

And was F-Poison even here?

"Captain, that's all I know for now. I'll let you know if anything else comes up," Quincy said, donning her cap again.

Leopold parked the car, and Quincy stepped out.

After she left, Percival moved to the back seat. "What's the plan for Patrick?"

Vivienne narrowed her eyes. "The Sea City lab is right under the Ashford family's factory. We'll wait for him to slip up."

Percival agreed. "Yeah, and the Boyd family will probably fall to Patrick soon. Once a person gets too big for their britches, they're bound to make a mistake."

They exchanged knowing smiles, anticipating the final takedown.

At the Boyd family, something that had never happened in decades was happening – the first and the second branches united, completely sidelining Wendy and Eliza to take over the Boyd Group.

"Where the hell is the contract with the Ashford family? Speak up, you decrepit old fool!" Teresa

slammed her hand on the table, demanding answers.

Wendy, still bruised from Nancy's beating, was in no state to speak.

"Ah, ah, ah..."

Impatient, Teresa kicked Wendy's wheelchair aside and grabbed Eliza by the hair. "Spit it out, you little wench. Where is the contract?"

Eliza bore the pain and spoke, "I don't know."

Theodore and Hayden sat quietly to the side, seemingly oblivious, allowing their wives to wrestle control of the Boyd family.

Anyway, the Boyd family fortune was bound to end up in their hands eventually, so let them squabble over it.

The grandchildren could not care less, staying aloof from the whole affair.

Now, Wendy was nothing more than a has-been, and Eliza had only ever strutted around like a peacock when Wendy back her up.

One down-and-out leading another; they were hardly worth a second thought. Content belongs to

Under pressure from Teresa and Nancy, Eliza had no choice but to dig out the contract signed with the

Ashfords and amend it to Theodore and Hayden's name.

This was not enough for Nancy, who promptly whipped out a share transfer document, insisting Eliza

divvy her stocks equally among her four children.

After signing a flurry of paperwork, Eliza was cast aside, severed from all ties to the Boyd family.

Wendy suffered the same pitiful fate.

Nancy glanced at the table; on it was a cryptic document retrieved from a safe. "Eliza, what in the world

is this?"

Nancy and Teresa exchanged a look. Anything meant for Cecilia was probably worthless, so they

dismissed it with disdain.

Chapter 536

Eliza tucked the document into her purse, glancing at her mother, who was barely coherent in her haze.

Other than Wendy, only she knew the true value of that document among the Boyds.

With this, the Ashford and even the mighty Ellington family would be within reach. If only she could

decipher the inscription on the family signet ring, a never-ending stream of wealth would follow.

Nancy and Teresa, those dimwits, believed they had struck gold. Little did they know the Ashfords had stooped to collaborate with the Boyds solely for this document.

Eliza crept back to her room, ensuring the document was well hidden.

Meanwhile, agents from the IRS and other financial institutions burst into the Boyd Mansion. "Who's in charge of Boyd Group?" They demanded.

Theodore and Hayden stood up in unison. "We both are. What's the issue?"

"You're under investigation for tax evasion and embezzlement of state assets. You're coming with us!"

The sudden turn of events left the Boyds dumbfounded.

Before they had a chance to divvy up their new-found control over the family fortune, they were accused of stealing from the state?

Theodore and Hayden were still clueless about their alleged crimes even after they were handcuffed.

Teresa blocked the agents, pleading, "There must be some mistake. We've just taken over Boyd Group."

"We're arresting the legal representatives. There's no mistake. Step aside, or we'll take you in for Obstruction of Justice," an agent said, pushing Teresa away.

Quick to react, Nancy swiftly dragged Eliza out of her room. “You’ve got the wrong person. She’s the legal representative of Boyd Group!”

Having overheard everything from upstairs, Eliza knew Boyd Group must have been set up. Shoving Nancy away, she retorted, “I don't have a single share to my name. Didn't you all take them? What's this got to do with me?”

Just then, Patrick sauntered in from outside, smirking at the chaos in the Boyd Mansion.

Even the naive Nancy and Teresa realized they had fallen into Patrick's snare.

Racked with regret, they thought that if only they had not been so greedy, Eliza and Wendy would be the ones facing charges, not them.

“Patrick, this is all a misunderstanding. It was Eliza who conned Gillian into signing those contracts. It has nothing to do with us. Please, let them take Eliza instead,” Teresa and Nancy begged.

Patrick ignored them and brushed past them. “One of you tried to blackmail me using my daughter, and the other sent her daughter to infiltrate my family. You think I don't know your schemes? Instead of begging me, better think about how to save your husbands from prison.”

As Theodore and Hayden were taken away, the Boyd Mansion plummeted from paradise to purgatory overnight.

The grandchildren were too preoccupied to care, scrambling for news or securing their own fortunes against their fathers' downfall.

The Boyd Mansion that was clamorous moments ago was now eerily silent.

Patrick seated on the patriarch's seat, observing Eliza with her battered face. Her beauty remained, the bruises almost adding a pitiable charm.

“Patrick, I’m relieved you’re okay. I wanted to bring Gillian home, but as you see, I’m powerless,” Eliza said, her voice breaking as she edged closer to Patrick.

Patrick did not resist; Eliza had once been the belle of Sea City, only missing her chance to marry into wealth because of Nathan. Now a widow, her allure was that of a mature rose.

Lifting her chin, he caressed her bruised cheek. “Eliza, I remember asking you out when I first moved to Sea City, but you were too busy for me.”

At his words, Eliza clung to him. “Patrick, my ex-husband harassed me so much; I didn’t even know you sought me out. If I had known, I would never have refused.”

She knew the Boyd Group's deals were now in Patrick's hands. To rise again, she needed to charm

him and find Vivienne for the signet ring, and then she could look for Nathan in Rivenwood!

Patrick's eyes narrowed; he tightened his grip, tossing Eliza aside.

In an instant, he seized her throat, his voice venomous. "Eliza, the 800 billion you siphoned from

Ashford Group—time to pay back, don't you think?"

Caught off guard by his sudden aggression, Eliza gasped. "I—I don't know..."

"Say that again!"

"I'll pay, I'll pay!" Eliza slapped at his hand, desperate for air.

Patrick released her, yanking at her collar. "I hear your family has a secret document needing

translation. Is that right?"

Eliza was shocked Patrick knew even this but feigned ignorance. "Patrick, ahem, yes, but it's not with

me. It's with the Boyd family matriarch."

"The matriarch?" Patrick frowned, contemplating his next move.

He was blissfully unaware of the Boyd family's storied past, steeped in ancient warrior lineage. Of

course, he had no idea who the Boyd family matriarch was.

Vivienne, again!

How in the world did Vivienne get tangled up with the Boyd family's signet ring? What a headache!

Patrick cursed under his breath, wishing that when her boss died, she had taken Vivienne with her!

Eliza shivered and nodded frantically.

After planting a bug on Eliza, Patrick slipped away from the Boyd Mansion as silently as he had arrived.

New chapter available on Dramanovels.com

Eliza sat on the ground for a long while, her mind racing, until Wendy's whimpering pulled her back to reality.

Had it not been for the noise, she would have forgotten entirely about Wendy.

Irritated, she walked over, hoisted Wendy off the floor, and placed her in a wheelchair.

Wendy flailed her broken hand in the air, and Eliza leaned down, her eyes narrowed, "Mom, you want me to bring Vivienne back to treat you, don't you?"

Wendy nodded vigorously, her eyes filled with hope as she looked at her favorite daughter.

Chapter 537

Wendy froze, disbelief etched across her face as Eliza's words sank in.

With a swift motion, Eliza grabbed a decorative pillow from the couch and pressed it against Wendy's face.

As she bore down with all her might, Eliza hissed, "Just so you know, every single present you've ever received was bought by Cecilia. I was merely the delivery girl. And every mistake? That was all me. But Cecilia, with her hapless, tender heart, took the fall every time. Before you kicked her out for the last time, she left you a sum of money. Guess what? I pocketed that with a laugh.

Mom, so why don't you just go ahead and die? Once you're gone, I'll have the perfect excuse to worm into the Ellington family's graces to get close to Nathan. Cecilia's a soft touch; she'll surely take me in, right?

Your existence is nothing but a burden to me. Better you're dead so that I can squeeze out one last benefit. Don't worry, I'll get the Boyd family's signet ring and raise our name from the ashes."

Wendy struggled briefly beneath the pillow but soon fell still.

She had died at the hands of the daughter she had cherished all her life.

Eliza let out a slow breath, dragged Wendy's body into the bedroom, and staged the scene to look like

an accidental death.

Then, pulling out her phone, she dialed Vivienne.

Meanwhile, Vivienne answered the call, her gaze still fixed on the computer screen, which displayed

Eliza's malicious face.

"Ms. Hawthorn, it's Eliza," the voice on the line said.

Vivienne reclined against the sofa, lazily stretching her legs onto the coffee table. "Mrs. Watson,

something I can do for you?"

Eliza despised the way Vivienne called her by her name. If only she had married Nathan back then,

Vivienne would have to respectfully address her as "Mom."

She was a hundred times better than Cecilia, yet Nathan only had eyes for that fool!

Eliza had been simmering with resentment for years, dreaming of the day she would replace Cecilia

and become Nathan's wife.

Eliza steadied her voice, "Ms. Hawthorn, I know you've got beef with the Boyds, but karma's caught up

with them now. I'm calling you today because there's something else."

Vivienne chuckled. "So, what's up?"

After a pause, Eliza continued, "The authorities have just taken in my brothers, and my mom... She passed away from a sudden stroke."

Eliza's voice broke into a sob, "Is Percival with you? Can he let Cecilia know to come back for Mom's funeral?"

Dropping to her knees, Eliza put on a performance worthy of an award, yelling, "My mom's gone, my mom's gone..."

Percival walked over with a glass of milk, a smirk tugging at his lips at the sight of Eliza's dramatic display.

If only his mother had such acting skills when she was caught eating spicy snacks while pregnant with Isolde, she would not have been banned from them for a month.

He took the phone and said, "I'll be there on behalf of the Ellingtons."

With that, he hung up, tired of the wailing that was ruining Vivienne's milk-drinking experience.

Eliza's crying ceased as the dial tone echoed, and a flicker of resentment crossed her eyes. They did not want to notify Cecilia?

Wendy was Cecilia's mother!

She had to make Cecilia come to the funeral; only then could she see Nathan. If Percival would not pass the message, she would send it herself.

Soon after, Vivienne received a text on her phone with the funeral notice from Eliza. Tapping a few times, she replied in Cecilia's voice, ensuring Eliza she would be there.

Eliza was completely unaware that Vivienne had intercepted her text, and she was under constant surveillance.

With a confirmed response, Eliza began to prepare for the funeral.

On the day of the funeral, notables from Sea City gathered alongside the Boyds' extended family.

Despite their current misfortune, the Boyds maintained their dignity.

Eliza stood at the entrance in mourning attire, eagerly awaiting Nathan's arrival. She had not seen him in over two decades and wondered how he had aged. Knowing him, he would have only grown more distinguished, just as unforgettable as more than two decades ago.

As guests arrived, Eliza scanned for the one face she yearned to see but saw none. Instead, Vivienne and Percival, clad in striking red, stepped out of a flashy red sports car.

The crowd murmured. It was Percival's grandmother's funeral; how could they be so thoughtless?

But Eliza was not upset. In fact, she was smug. The more outrageous Vivienne and Percival acted, the better for her. And her immediate goal was to reclaim the Boyd family's signet ring and find a way to Nathan.

Cecilia had replied that she would attend the funeral, which meant Nathan would, too.

One funeral, two birds.

Wiping away fake tears, Eliza advanced, offering a bouquet. "Percival, pay respects to your grandma.

She won't hold this against you."

Percival took the flowers, and he and Vivienne made a token gesture. It was plain to see their hearts were not in it.

"Percival, for heaven's sake, that was your grandmother," someone in the crowd admonished, a hint of disbelief in their tone.

A chorus of agreement followed, voices tinged with disappointment and judgment.

"Respect for the dead is the least you could do. Can't you even pretend to have some decency?"

"You're being downright shameful, unworthy of calling yourselves human!"

Amid the murmurs of accusation, Percival swept his gaze over the gathering, and the grumbling voices fell silent once more.

Eliza saw her chance and stepped in to smooth things over.

It was then that the crowd realized Cecilia, Percival's mother, was conspicuously absent from her mother's funeral! Updated at Dramanovels.com

No wonder Percival was acting out. It all traced back to their mother's neglect.

Vivienne watched Eliza coolly. She found her utterly foolish, even more so than Arabella had been in her day.

To date, Eliza was quite possibly the dimmest bulb she had ever encountered.

"Eliza, what misunderstandings are you referring to?" Vivienne inquired.

Catching a glimpse of the ring on Vivienne's finger, a dark glint flashed in Eliza's eyes. "Ms. Hawthorn, if you're engaged to Percival, do me the courtesy of calling me 'Auntie.'

Vivienne crossed her arms, her interest piqued. "By all means, do tell."

Chapter 538

Eliza squinted her eyes and then burst into tears, spilling the beans about everything Vivienne had

done in the Boyd Mansion.

From the first day she arrived, insisting the whole family disinfect and kneel to welcome her, to the gruesome act of cutting off Wendy's hand, Eliza left no stone unturned in her vivid recount.

The crowd was in disbelief. How could Vivienne, just a young girl, be so extreme?

Eliza then produced a video as evidence. "This is from our home security system. Every single thing she did is captured here. I'm not lying!"

The video played out before their eyes, and gasps of shock were heard, especially during the chilling moment Vivienne severed Wendy's hand.

Vivienne did not deny her actions and calmly admitted, "Yes, I did those things."

"Vivienne, if you hadn't done all this, how could my mother have passed away so suddenly? It's all because of you. You better give me the Boyd family signet ring back now. It belongs to our family, and you don't deserve to wear it!"

Eliza's accusations, backed by the video, filled everyone with righteous indignation towards Vivienne.

Watching Eliza's tear-stained face, Vivienne just smiled. "Why don't we watch the rest of the video?"

Eliza was puzzled. The footage of the hand-cutting had already played.

What more could there be?

The crowd turned their attention back to the screen only to see Vivienne reattach Wendy's hand,

followed by the Boyd family members beating her on the ground. Then, the video showed Eliza

smothering her mother to death with a pillow!

Eliza stumbled backward in shock.

Impossible. She had deleted that part of the video and even destroyed the hard drive.

How could it still exist?

The room fell silent.

"Eliza killed her!"

"My God, her own mother..."

"This is horrifying. Someone, call the police!"

As if on cue, a police car pulled up outside the funeral home, and out stepped Cecilia and Nathan.

Vivienne approached, removed the Boyd family signet ring from her finger, and handed it to Cecilia.

Eliza's wish had finally come true.

She saw Vivienne relinquish the Boyd family ring and caught sight of Nathan, whom she had not seen in over twenty years.

But the ring went to Cecilia, and Nathan was there with the police to arrest her.

"Officer, she is Eliza Boyd, the main culprit behind the murder of my beloved mother. Please, take her away," Nathan said, sheltering Cecilia in his arms without sparing a glance at Eliza.

Eliza was deaf to the murmurs around her; her eyes were fixed on Nathan.

She wanted to approach him, to ask why he did not love her.

But it was too late.

The police pinned Eliza to the ground, handcuffed her, and escorted her into the police car.

Suddenly, Eliza coughed up blood and, with a jolt, burst into manic laughter.

"I was supposed to marry Nathan! Let me go! I'm Mrs. Ellington! That Cecilia is nothing, I've killed her, I killed her..."

Percival shielded Vivienne's eyes and whispered, "Vivienne, did you do this?"

Vivienne shook her head. "No, it was her own undoing. She couldn't handle the shock and went mad."

Eliza's plans had backfired spectacularly. She thought she could secure the ring and get closer to

Nathan by orchestrating this funeral, but she had been deluding herself.

Whether twenty years ago or today, Nathan's eyes had only ever held Cecilia.

Cecilia nestled into Nathan's embrace, her eyes moist with emotion. She had thought her

estrangement from her family would be her final chapter, yet here she was amid an unbelievable turn of events.

Nathan stroked Cecilia's hair. "It's okay now, Cecilia."

Cecilia glanced at her mother's portrait, and Eliza's deranged screams seemed to fade away.

With that, Cecilia's ties to the Boyd family had truly vanished into thin air.

Wendy's funeral had sent shock-waves through Sea City; it was a story that demanded discussion due to the sheer weight of its revelations.

Vivienne brought Cecilia and Nathan to her villa, not expecting that Maddox would already be waiting for them.

"Cecilia, Nathan, allow me to introduce myself. I'm Vivienne's uncle, Maddox Perez. You can just call me Maddox," he said with a familiarity that took Cecilia and Nathan aback.

Nathan shook Maddox's hand warmly. "Mr. Perez, I've heard much about you."

Maddox slapped Nathan's shoulder chummily. "We're all family here, no need for formalities. Come on,

Cecilia, take a seat. I've been briefed about the family situation. Don't worry. I'll handle the aftermath in

Sea City. No one messes with the Perez family on my watch. You two just enjoy your stay."

Faced with Maddox's boisterousness, Nathan was unsure how to respond.

Cecilia, too, was unsure how to interact with Maddox, leading to an awkward silence.

Vivienne stepped in to smooth things over. "Uncle, why don't you let them rest?"

"Right, right, you two go on and get some rest. We can plan some fun activities for tomorrow," Maddox

said, waving them off with a carefree gesture.

Nathan, nodding, led Cecilia back to their room.

Were the Perez family not supposed to be composed?

Maddox was quite the character, unsettling yet oddly endearing.

Vivienne shook her head with a resigned chuckle. "Uncle, you've scared Mom and Dad half to death."

"Nonsense! With these good looks? Impossible to scare the in-laws. Rest easy!"

Percival rubbed his forehead in mild exasperation. He really wished Leopold would tone it down a notch in the future.

"Alright, down to brass tacks," Maddox said, stretching out in his chair, legs crossed. "Vivienne, did you manage to get your hands on that document?" Content belongs to Dramanovels.com

She pulled out the document. "Uncle, could you please..."

"Hey, we're family here. No need for formalities." Maddox snapped his fingers, cutting her off.

Then, he chuckled, asking, "The Boyd family's signet ring—where is it?"

"Right here," Percival said, drawing the ring from his pocket. With the day's chaos, Cecilia had entrusted it to him for safekeeping.

Maddox placed the ring over a particular symbol on the document. "Just watch."

No wonder Eliza had been so desperate for the signet ring—it was the key to translating the document!

Chapter 539

Vivienne froze for a moment.

Was Maddox implying that she should carry on with this contract?

"Exactly as you're thinking," Maddox slid the contract toward Vivienne. "The Perez family has its own fish to fry these days, not focusing on bionic tech. And I know the reason the Ashfords have stood the

test of time has a lot to do with this project."

He paused, his gaze growing intense before he continued, "The person who got the Ashfords involved in the first place was your mother, Karen, right?"

Vivienne nodded but remained tight-lipped.

She was not ready to stir the pot with the Perez family's waters still uncharted.

"Vivienne, only the Perez and the Boyd families are in on the bionic tech secret. Your mother managed to bring this concept to life, and it's nearly identical to what the Perez family envisioned. I think she must have seen their initial concept draft. I'm not saying she copied or stole it. I'm just saying..."

"Uncle, I get what you're trying to say."

Vivienne smiled at Maddox.

She knew he was beginning to question her identity.

If her mother had indeed introduced those concepts, matching the Perez family's ideas, it only meant she had some connection with them.

If that was the case, could Karen perhaps be Sasha?

Maddox hesitated to voice his suspicion, fearing another disappointment.

Vivienne tucked the contract away. "Thanks, Uncle. I'll take it from here and push the research forward."

Maddox nodded. "Yeah, I believe in you."

He also believed that she must be his niece, his sister's daughter.

But with a paternity test looming, this was a matter that still needed resolution!

...

At the Ashford Mansion.

The arrest of Eliza came as an abrupt blow, derailing Patrick's many schemes.

Eliza was now the sole survivor of the Boyd lineage, and Patrick had intended to consolidate his power by winning over the Boyd Group's shareholders with her help. It would save him a great deal of trouble.

Plus, she was supposed to retrieve the Boyd family signet ring from Vivienne, and the contract was supposed to be in her possession.

But now, with her under lock and key and the murder footage spreading like wildfire online, no one could bail her out.

Patrick turned pale with anger.

What he thought was his trump card had become utterly useless.

"Dad, you've been pacing for ages; you're making my head spin. What's going on with Eliza? Did she really kill Wendy?" Gillian had woken up to see Patrick pacing and was clueless about the unfolding events.

Her mind was still preoccupied with dreams of marrying Percival.

Patrick sat down and asked, "Gillian, has Mara called you recently?"

"No, with their family in such a mess, why would she bother? Besides, I don't want to deal with her anymore. Percival has already cut ties with them, so she's useless to me now." Gillian snorted with disdain for her once close friend.

Why bother with someone useless?

Their friendship was one of mutual exploitation, nothing more.

Patrick frowned. "Gillian, call Mara. Tell her to find a way to get close to Vivienne and retrieve the Boyd family signet ring. And try to find the contract Wendy left behind. Tell her you can help her turn things

around."

Gillian was puzzled. "Dad, you still want to entangle with them? A family full of criminals?"

"Just do as I say. Those two items are crucial for our family. We won't be at Vivienne's mercy anymore

if you manage to get them. Hurry before Vivienne catches on."

Gillian wanted to probe further, but seeing Patrick's ashen face, she swallowed her questions.

She had never seen her father so agitated.

Following Patrick's instructions, Gillian dialed Mara's number. For the Boyd family fortune, Mara readily

agreed.

Unbeknownst to them, Vivienne had heard every word of their conversation.

Vivienne took off her headphones, chuckling as she reviewed the translated documents on the table.

"Patrick's only managed to stay afloat all these years relying on GTO." Vivienne shook her head. The

man was foolish.

Even now, Patrick was fixated on the contract rather than ensuring his safety.

Percival was monitoring satellite imagery on his computer, where three red dots were converging into a

trap around a factory at the center.

"If he had any sense, he'd realize that loyalty to my mentor is the wisest choice," Percival remarked calmly.

Vivienne curved her lips. "Traitors always meet a traitor's end."

Ten minutes later, Mara's call came through to Percival.

"Bro, it's Mara."

Her voice was laced with sobs, still not fully comprehending how the Boyd family had fallen so far.

Percival turned on the speakerphone. "What's up?"

"I don't know what to do. With all this chaos at home, I... Can I come to you? I want to apologize to

Vivienne, no, to your wife. I..."

"Head to the Ashford Mansion. Tell Gillian I'll bring over what she wants."

With that, Percival hung up.

He had run out of patience for playing games with these two dimwits.

Vivienne looked up, her gaze settling on Percival's expression with a hint of surprise. "What's wrong?"

Why did he suddenly stop toying with them?

Vivienne's brow creased slightly.

Someone had finally caught on to the real reason behind Percival's visit to Sea City.

Initially, Percival had used the excuse of visiting the Boyd family to gain entry into Sea City. However,

his actual mission was to investigate the secretive virus research facility there. Updated at

Dramanovels.com

This task had been assigned through a mysterious, classified document found on Micah's desk—not

through the proper channels of the central office.

Thus, Percival's investigation into the Sea City docks and other related activities had gone unnoticed

by the city's main office.

Now, they had finally turned their attention to Percival.

Consequently, the role of Deputy Director at Rivenwood headquarters was endowed with nearly

equivalent authority.

With Micah's suspension, Percival was set to take the reins at Rivenwood's central office.

The more power bestowed upon him, the closer he would get to the epicenter of authority.

And the closer he would be to unmasking the traitor.

Chapter 540

Indeed, no sooner had Percival finished speaking than he received a confidential message from the higher-ups.

He was ordered to return to Rivenwood immediately to take control of the situation at Rivenwood headquarters.

Stretching languidly, Vivienne remarked, "Looks like it's time to wrap this up."

That evening, Mara sat anxiously in the living room of the Ashford Mansion.

"Gillian, I'm still worried. What did Percival mean? I didn't say anything, and he said he'd bring what you want. This..."

Gillian handed Mara a cup of steaming cola. "Oh, don't fret, sweetheart. If your brother said so, we just wait. Dad mentioned that as long as the contract and the Boyd family signet ring are brought over, you can inherit the Boyd family. Trust me."

To Gillian, neither the contract nor the Boyd family signet ring mattered much; she could not understand why Patrick was so hung up on them.

Earlier tonight, she had merely phoned Patrick to inform him that Mara had brought the items without

getting into details.

Before long, Percival arrived at the Ashford Mansion with Vivienne, knocking on the door.

Gillian quickly primed her hair and went to answer the door, brimming with excitement. To her

absolute surprise, the door opened to a squad of armed individuals who stormed in and surrounded the

Ashford Mansion.

Staring at Percival in disbelief, Gillian asked, "Mr. Ellington, what is this?"

"Patrick is suspected of drug trafficking. We're here to search the premises." Percival produced a

search warrant, flicking it so that agents from Vanguard Agency began scouring the Ashford Mansion.

"You must be mistaken; my father has been framed..." Gillian stepped back, only to see someone

retrieve a plaster doll from her room.

It was a gift from Patrick for her eighteenth birthday.

With a crack, the doll shattered, spilling its contents on the floor: a bag of Keco!

Vivienne approached, opened the bag, and took a sniff. "This is the original Keco we've been searching

for, identical to the batch seized at the docks."

As the sound of car doors closing came from outside, a scream followed.

“Captain Wolf, target identified as Patrick in person, suspect is secured, we can wrap this up!”

As Patrick was led inside, his face contorted in horror at the sight of the plaster doll fragments on the floor.

“Miss, I swear, this isn’t my doing. I don’t know why this would be in my house, I...”

“Mr. Ashford, or rather, should I call you Mr. Keco?” Vivienne dangled the bag of Keco, shaking it with a smirk. “How did my mom ever overlook your talent? You even ventured into drug production.”

Seeing Vivienne’s reaction, a flicker of guilt crossed Patrick’s eyes.

Keco was Patrick's code name within the GTO organization.

Patrick had fallen to his knees, realizing his end had come.

“How... How did you find out?”

Since Karen's death, Patrick had been operating under GTO for the past decade, essentially acting as their chief in Sea City.

Unlike Scott and Belle, who were relentlessly searching for Karen's legacy potion, Patrick was responsible for managing GTO’s assets.

He had been amassing wealth through drug production and trafficking, providing GTO with cutting-edge bionic technology.

Over the years, he had become bolder in his illicit wealth acquisition.

Vivienne chuckled. "What's done in the dark will come to light."

Initially, Vivienne had not focused on Patrick, but his ambition to absorb the Boyd family's mysterious business network was too great to ignore.

The Boyd family's contract was unknown to outsiders, yet Patrick schemed to overtake the Boyds and unearth that contract, arousing Vivienne's suspicion.

Following the dock incident, Percival and Vivienne continued their investigation. Tracing Keco led them to the factory where it was produced – Patrick's bionic research facility.

Outwardly, he claimed to be advancing bionic tech, but in truth, it was a front for drug production, exploiting bionic channels for profit.

Anna and Leopold also arrived at this moment.

"Captain Wolf, we've secured the factory – found a five-ton stockpile. This guy's bigger than some international kingpins," Leopold slapped Patrick on the head, "Damn, thought I'd have a big bust, but

the DEA got there first.”

Vivienne glanced up, knowing from Leopold’s words that the factory was just a drug production site, not GTO’s virus research base.

It was another dead end, though not unexpected.

Percival’s true purpose in Sea City was known to the local division, and GTO’s virus research base would not be easily uncovered.

“Take him away.” Percival gestured for the agents to escort Patrick out and seal off the Ashford Mansion.

Gillian and Mara watched the entire ordeal, too stunned to grasp what had just unfolded.

How could her father be involved in drug trafficking? Who were Percival and Vivienne, and how could they just abduct people?

What on earth was happening?

She did not understand how everything had changed overnight; all she knew was that she was done for.

After Percival had shut down the Ashford Mansion, he and Vivienne left without a second glance at the heiress of the household.

It did not matter to them, after all.

She dared not stay any longer.

What if she got dragged into this mess? New chapter available on Dramanovels.com

Gillian slowly turned her head to look at the evasive Mara and let out a mocking laugh. "Mara, are you here to revel in my misfortune?"

Mara shook her head, "Of course not. It's just getting late, and with the Ashford Mansion under lockdown, if you need somewhere to go, I can offer you..."

Before Mara could finish her offer, Gillian picked up a shattered piece of a porcelain doll from the ground and slid it across Mara's face.

Gillian watched as blood began to stream down Mara's cheek and burst into deranged laughter.

"You're insane. Let go of me! Let go!"