

Million-Dollar 571

Chapter 571

Vance exhaled slowly. "Vivienne, you two should know that in the annals of ancient warrior lineages, there are some secrets. Nothing is impossible. The world is always full of things that turn our understanding on its head. It's not unscientific; it's just beyond the current reach of human knowledge."

Listening to Vance's sermon, Vivienne could not help but chuckle.

What was the point of stating common knowledge?

What was Vance really after?

Why would the head of Vanguard Agency be delving into the secrets of ancient warrior lineages?

"If you want to collaborate with me, show me you mean business," Vivienne said, leaning back in her chair with an amused expression as she watched Vance.

Vance folded his arms, his fists clenched with a hint of nervousness. After a moment of thought, he decided to lay all his cards on the table.

"There is... a connection between me and the ancient warrior lineage," Vance confessed, locking eyes with Vivienne. "It's like when the Perez family married with the Lynette family. A member of the Edwards family, who happened to be my auntie, married into an ancient warrior lineage, which has a tie

to the Sheldon family massacre that cannot be ignored."

Vance continued, "After the Sheldons disappeared, the Edwards family got a slice of luck, which paved the way for their current stature. But my family has never had peace; it is always plagued by disturbances. I believe it has a lot to do with Ulysses."

"Isn't Ulysses missing? How is he involved?" Vivienne inquired.

"The truth is, Ulysses was not home when the Sheldon family met their fate. His trace was never found, hence the assumption of his disappearance. I've approached Frostfire Intelligence Agency to investigate Ulysses' whereabouts. I don't believe he's dead."

Vivienne's gaze sharpened with a dangerous glint, "Vance, this is a personal request, not from Vanguard Agency, right?"

Vance nodded. "Yes, this is my personal matter. The cost is no object; the reward will be substantial if you find him."

Vivienne eyed Vance intently, then said, "Alright, I'll take it."

After leaving Vanguard Agency, Percival glanced at Vivienne, "Don't you suspect Vance was the one

behind the pursuit of Finnian?"

Finnian had been dodging the ancient warrior lineage for years. With Vance's high rank within Vanguard Agency, it would be easy to locate someone, especially with his ties to the lineage.

It was entirely possible that Vance had ordered the hit on Finnian.

Vivienne nodded. "Of course, I suspect. But I also suspect Vance has other motives."

Percival grunted. "Indeed, he's up to something else."

Finnian's only friend was Vivienne's mother, Karen!

The connections were hard to ignore.

Finnian had been 'dead' for years. Why was Vance suddenly keen on finding him? And he had approached Vivienne, too. The series of strange behaviors was undoubtedly suspicious.

Percival steered the car, "You've got a point. Where to next? Fancy some barbecue?"

There was a new grill house in town with rave reviews, and Percival had been itching to take Vivienne there.

Vivienne pulled out her phone and dialed Finnian's number, "Finnian, how about barbecue on me? You coming?"

Finnian would surely show up.

His favorite dish was brisket!

Percival's lips curved into a slight smile; Vivienne was setting another trap for Finnian.

Soon, the trio converged at the barbecue restaurant.

"You little rascal, what's gotten into you to treat me to barbecue? Got another nasty trick up your sleeve?" Finnian knew his apprentice too well; she would not invite him to a meal out of sheer kindness.

Vivienne placed the brisket on the grill. "Ulysses Sheldon, do you know Vance?"

Finnian, who had not heard his full name in ages, was taken aback.

It took him a moment to remember that was his name.

"Watch your mouth, girl, and call me Master!" Finnian rapped Vivienne's tongs with his fork, channeling a bit of energy into the strike that numbed her hands and feet.

But Vivienne did not let go. "Answer me, do you know Vance?"

Finnian pressed his lips together. For the sake of the brisket, he endured!

"I don't know any Vance, but I knew his grandfather. The Edwards are nothing but lackeys. Now, will you let it go before you burn it!"

Only then did Vivienne release her grip, and Finnian hastily snatched the brisket away, fearing she might change her mind.

"Today, Vance came to me with all the files on the Sheldon family's disappearance," Vivienne said casually.

Finnian paused, his devouring of the brisket slowing.

Percival silently passed him a glass of carrot juice, specially ordered by Vivienne.

Finnian had a quirk that always puzzled his friends; whenever he felt a whirlwind of emotions or the weight of the world on his shoulders, he would reach for a glass of carrot juice.

"It's my vitamin boost," he would say with a wink.

Back when Finnian had faked his death, he was so close to munching on carrots straight from the garden patch.

He wolfed down his brisket with gusto and then grabbed the glass of carrot juice from Percival, gulping it down in one.

"What does he want from me? A fortune telling?"

Meanwhile, the perpetrators lived freely, thriving more than ever, with even distant relatives becoming magnates in Rivenwood.

And the Sheldons? Content of DramaNovels.com

Forgotten by all.

Vivienne served up another slice of brisket. "Finnian, I want to hear what really happened back then. I need to know how to proceed. And Vance – there's something off about him. I suspect he might have been the one behind my mother's suicide."

Finnian pressed his lips together. "Didn't you talk to Maddox about this the other day? Didn't he mention anything about my past?"

"That's exactly why I want to know more," Vivienne said, her gaze firm.

Finnian heaved a sigh. "I knew you would not let it go, but honestly, I don't know what truly happened back then."

It was a common request, as our family was known for such services. The more prosperous the family,

the more they believed in our predictions. So, my father accepted the commission.

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Finnian's face grew somber as he recounted the tale.

"But surprisingly, the family heads lost it. They accused my father of spouting madness and greed. A

week later, our family suffered an unprecedented blow. That night, everyone disappeared without a

trace."

Finnian paused, the pain of the old wounds surfacing fleetingly across his features before vanishing

just as quickly.

Perhaps time had dulled the sharp edges of his grief, but the sudden recollection still pierced him

deeply.

After a minute, Finnian continued, "I wasn't home that night. I was out with Jasper Perez—your

granddad—knocking back a few beers. When I got back, the stench of blood was heavy, but there was

no sign of their bodies, not even of my baby sister, who had just been born. I knew something was off,

so I hid.

Sure enough, by the next day, all traces of the Sheldon family were wiped clean. No one but your

granddad looked for me, and I couldn't risk exposing myself or bringing trouble to him. Soon after, our

family's Mystic Vein was carved up by the same family heads who had sought my father's fortune-

telling. And just like that, no one mentioned the Sheldon family again."

Having finished his story, Finnian drained the last of his carrot juice and handed the empty glass to

Percival. "Hit me."

Percival took the glass without a word, refilled it with carrot juice, and handed it back, then turned his

attention back to grilling, serving up portions to Vivienne and Finnian.

"Kiddo, Vance descends from one of those families, an in-law from back in the day. You should know

this. The Edwards family got rich off our Mystic Vein, beneficiaries of that old mess. Now they're looking

for me, probably with some ulterior motive. But don't worry, they pose no threat to me. And Vance, he's

not one of the ones who hunted me. Rest easy on that."

Vivienne relaxed a bit at Finnian's words.

If Vance was not after Finnian, his reasons for seeking him out must be different.

"Finnian, are you going to meet him?" She asked.

Finnian waved the idea off. "I've still got a lot of things to figure out. I can't meet him now. You go ahead

with your business, and when it's time, I'll face him myself. Won't stand in the way of your payday."

Finnian's face lightened as he tucked into the grilled meat.

He knew his protégé all too well.

A little money-grubber, that one.

Vivienne nodded and snagged the last piece of brisket. "Among the "a lot of things" you mentioned, is

one of them that call Vance made to my mom?"

Finnian choked on his carrot juice, coughing violently for what felt like an eternity before he caught his

breath.

"You sly girl, you know everything already, and still you ask me. Where are your mother... and... Huh?"

Finnian straightened up only to find that Vivienne and Percival had vanished!

The server approached with the bill, "Good evening, sir. Your table's total comes to 38,800 dollars. Will

that be card or cash?"

Finnian stared in disbelief. "All this for a few plates of meat? \$38,800??"

The server smiled, "The two who were with you earlier took a bottle of our finest imported wine, worth

\$38,000."

Damn it!

Finnian, who had not sworn in ages, cursed them in his mind.

He knew the girl would not treat him to barbecue out of the goodness of her heart!

Thirty-eight thousand eight hundred dollars!

Hard-earned cash, gone!

Finnian paid with a heavy heart, packed up the leftovers, and handed them to Vesper, "Forty grand, pay up, or no dinner for you."

Vesper silently opened a pot of hotpot. "Enjoy your meal. I prefer others."

Meanwhile, the escapees, Vivienne and Percival, were cozied up in a hotpot joint, savoring their feast.

"Nothing beats a hotpot," Vivienne mumbled, contentedly biting into a slice of hand-cut lamb.

Percival wiped a smear of sauce from the corner of her mouth. "Vivienne, something about what

Finnian said doesn't sit right with me."

Vivienne took a swig of cola. "Yeah, it is odd."

To annihilate an entire family over a fortune-telling? For an ancient warrior lineage sworn to serve their

country, such extreme measures did not add up.

And the persistent hunt for Finnian only deepened the mystery. It could not just be about a prophecy.

There was something else at play, something hidden.

Vivienne smirked, her interest in the ancient warrior lineage growing deeper.

Percival dropped more lamb into the simmering broth for her, and she ate her fill.

Finally full, she leaned back and said to Percival, "Mr. Wolf, the angle Vance is playing—it's all about the ancient warrior lineage."

Wiping her mouth, Vivienne stood up. "Let's go find Leopold. I'm itching to see exactly what kind of mission he's on."

Leopold was a man of the Vanguard Agency, and that meant he had his own code of honor.

When it came to his assignments, not even his own father could pry a word out of him, let alone

Vivienne.

So, Percival had a good deal of faith in Leopold's ability to keep mum.

Vivienne stretched her neck. "As long as we know where he is, that's enough."

She had her own ways of dealing with Leopold. New chapter available on Dramanovels.com

Even if he would not utter a peep about his mission, a few minutes of conversation with him and

Vivienne could usually piece together the endgame.

With a nonchalant shrug, Percival led Vivienne to the car. "He's in Sea City now. We won't make it in time. Let's give him a ring."

"Okay," Vivienne replied, pulling out her phone to dial Leopold's number.

But there was no answer.

She tried again several times, but there was still no answer.

Vivienne frowned and borrowed Percival's phone, attempting once more—still, nothing.

Leopold could ignore calls from anyone else, but he would never ignore calls from her or Percival.

Something must have happened to Leopold!

Chapter 573

Percival immediately got in touch with Thomas. "We need to head to Sea City. Leopold's in trouble."

Thomas was in the midst of a routine drill at Vanguard Agency. Hearing Percival's words, his

expression froze. "Husky checked in from a different location just this morning, and he replied to the roll call in the chat group ten minutes ago. There's no way something's happened."

To streamline operations, Vanguard Agency conducted random roll calls in their chat group, ensuring everyone checked in unless they were deep undercover like Vance.

Percival's brows furrowed.

Ten minutes ago was when Vivienne had made her first call.

If Leopold was replying to the roll call, he could not have missed Vivienne's call!

What on earth was going on?

Vivienne also sensed that something was amiss. It was unlike Leopold to drop off the radar.

Then, out of the blue, Charlotte Redwood, who had not been in touch for a while, called Vivienne.

"Things have hit the fan, Vivienne. Something happened to Griffin," Charlotte said, her voice laced with urgency.

"What's happened?" Vivienne asked, her face a mask of composure.

Leopold had been assigned to infiltrate the Martinez family. If Griffin was in trouble, too, it had to be connected.

Charlotte swallowed hard before replying, "Griffin's been locked up by her family. They won't let her communicate with anyone. If it was not for an old cell phone she found to contact me with, I'd have no

clue she was in trouble."

Griffin was locked up?

Vivienne's brow creased. "Why would the Martinez family lock up Griffin? What's gone down?"

"That guy she was crushing on—Leopold. He's been caught stealing bioweapon secrets from the

Martinez family. He's now locked up in Sea City's military prison, awaiting trial!"

"What?" Vivienne gripped Percival's wrist, and he immediately pulled over to the curb, still on the line with Thomas.

Vivienne turned on the speakerphone so both Percival and Thomas could hear.

"Why would Leopold steal bioweapon secrets from the Martinez family?" Vivienne pressed for answers.

Charlotte stamped her foot in frustration. "I've got no idea, and neither does Griffin. She just can't believe Leopold would do such a thing. She wanted to testify for him in court, and that's why she's been detained. She contacted me so I could get in touch with you to see if you could come up with a plan."

"Griffin mentioned that the bioweapon research is a national secret. If Leopold doesn't come clean, he could be facing the death penalty. And this time, it's someone from the ancient warrior lineage

intervening directly. They said not even Leopold's superiors can do anything about it."

Percival's already stern face grew colder. It was obvious—they did not want him involved.

"How long has Leopold been locked up?" Percival inquired.

Charlotte hesitated, then quickly replied, "Mr. Ellington, he's been in custody for nearly two weeks.

Griffin's beside herself with worry."

The chill on Percival's face deepened. "Thomas, what's Leopold's check-in record been like over the past couple of weeks?"

"Punctual and responsive, nothing unusual." Thomas's voice cooled as well.

Then, Soren's voice came through. "Percival, something's fishy here."

"Ms. Vivienne, Husky's been active in our chat group every day for the last two weeks. He's been responding less, but the last time he spoke was three days ago," Anna added.

Their chat group was initially set up by Vivienne to discuss a new bomb detection device but had since turned into a casual conversation hub.

Vivienne and Percival seldom checked the group, usually leaving Anna and Thomas to interact with Leopold.

If Leopold had been checking in normally and chatting in the group for the past two weeks, it meant someone had been controlling all his means of external communication!

Vivienne's expression frosted over.

"Charlotte, tell Griffin not to worry. I'll figure out a way to get Leopold out. He won't be harmed,"

Vivienne said with icy resolve. The undertone was clear: mess with her people, and you'd pay.

Her protégé was only hers to bully!

Charlotte nodded vigorously. "Okay, I can't contact Griffin often, but I'll pass the message. Please,

Vivienne and Mr. Ellington, you have to help them."

After assuring Charlotte, Vivienne ended the call.

Percival instructed, "Keep messaging Leopold as usual through the group chat."

"Roger that." With that, Thomas disconnected, too.

Percival pocketed his phone. "Vivienne, trace Leopold's last locations from the group chat and his cell."

"On it," Vivienne pulled out her portable mini laptop and began to trace all of Leopold's communication devices.

Seconds later, her expression darkened.

"He's at the Rivenwood Vanguard Agency headquarters!"

Vivienne snapped the computer shut. "It's Vance again."

Vivienne was undoubtedly furious this time.

If Leopold had screwed up royally, there was no need for Vanguard Agency to interfere, and she would personally escort him to the prison.

But being framed and rushed to trial? That was a pill she was absolutely not going to swallow without a fight.

Percival laid a restraining hand on her shoulder. "Vivienne, give me a moment here. We can't just storm the prison, not yet."

The full picture was still a blur, and Percival knew if they went in blind, the fallout would be catastrophic.

Vivienne's glare could have cut glass as she turned to him. "Leopold's trial is tomorrow. I don't have time!"

Percival's grip on her hand was vice-like. Content of Drqmanovels.com

He felt her urgency in his bones.

But he knew Leopold's life's ambition was to retire with honors from the Agency, his chest bedecked with more medals than anyone else.

The idea of him stealing state secrets was ludicrous. Such treachery was unthinkable for any of their comrades.

There was only one explanation – this was a setup, a mission from way up the chain.

But without clarity, Percival could not let Vivienne storm the prison. If they did, and the charges stuck, Leopold's dreams would be dashed forever.

Vivienne's rage cooled, her beautiful face framed with a veil of frost. She dialed Draven again, her voice now icy calm, "Stand by at Sea City. Wait for my order."

"Understood." Draven immediately mobilized the Nine Mystics Society, setting their sights on Sea City.

Chapter 574

In the car, there was a brief silence between Percival and Vivienne before Percival broke it, his grip tightening on Vivienne's hand. "We need to split up. I'm heading over to Vanguard Agency to confront Vance. He's up to his neck in this heist, and I'm sure he's involved. You should visit your grandpa. With this mess involving the ancient warrior lineage, he might know how to help."

Vivienne suddenly remembered that Leopold's imprisonment was due to pressure from members of the ancient warrior lineage, which left the Vanguard Agency unable to intervene.

The Perez family might just have a solution.

With that thought, Vivienne's eyes narrowed imperceptibly.

She had spent ten years training at the Emerald Monastery, taking time each year to build her circle of influence.

She founded the Nine Mystics Society, strengthening the Monastery's influence, believing she had become strong enough to protect those she cared about. Yet, facing the ancient warrior lineage, her power seemed insignificant.

The Nine Mystics Society was like an ant in front of the ancient warrior lineage, easily crushed.

And her control over GTO, which she thought was firm, had slipped through her fingers.

It was time to act.

"Okay, I'm on it," Vivienne said, squeezing Percival's hand back. "Make it quick. We can't let anything happen to Leopold."

"Right. Our Husky? No one's going to pluck him without a fight."

They parted ways then and there, Percival driving straight to Vanguard Agency.

Thomas, Anna, and Soren were all waiting in the deputy director's office, trying to get a hold of Leopold.

When they saw Percival return, they all approached him eagerly. "Deputy!"

"Where's Vance?" Percival's voice was grim.

Understanding dawned on the others, "In his office, Soren's been keeping an eye on him. He hasn't left."

They were all elite members of Vanguard Agency, smart enough to guess Vance's involvement.

Something had gone wrong inside the agency, and there was no way the director could be oblivious.

Percival was the deputy director. To have kept such a secret from him until the trial was nigh meant no one but the director himself could have managed it.

Upon learning about this, Thomas and the others had been closely watching Vance's every move at Vanguard Agency.

Percival took off his watch and tossed his jacket on the sofa, storming out with fury in his eyes.

Soren moved to follow, but Percival shoved him back. "Stay put!"

With no other choice, Soren remained in the deputy director's office.

Percival did not even knock; he pushed open Vance's office door and overheard the chime of an incoming message.

It was Leopold's phone.

Percival had teased Leopold about that custom ringtone before.

Vance, seeing Percival enter, silently pocketed the phone. "What brings you here so late?"

"So late, and you're not home, sitting here with Leopold's phone, messaging Thomas. Amusing, is it?"

Percival walked over and pulled open Vance's drawer without ceremony.

There it was, Leopold's phone and tablet, right inside the drawer!

"Don't you ever put it on silent?" Percival grabbed Vance by the collar, pinning him against the cabinet.

It looked as if he might snap Vance's neck at any moment.

Vance did not resist, taking all of Percival's anger. "I wondered why Soren and Anna were hovering around the director's office today. Percival, sit down, let me explain."

Percival punched Vance in the face. "Listen to you talk nonsense?"

Percival rarely cursed or got physical with his superiors, regardless of whether they deserved respect.

But this time, he could not hold back.

How could Vance expect him to sit down and listen so casually?

The commotion in the director's office soon drew everyone in the agency. Percival loosened his tie.

"Get out, all of you!"

Naturally, nobody dared linger, and even the other agency heads did not try to intervene.

Percival was like a raging lion, a fierce warrior one dared not approach.

Soren and Thomas stood guard at the door, angry themselves, yet they had not expected Percival to

explode with such fury, to strike the director!

Anna tried to reach Vivienne to no avail.

Little did she know that Vivienne encountering Vance now would be an even more terrifying prospect.

Percival slammed the director's office door shut, lifting Vance off the floor. "Talk! What happened?"

Vance wiped the blood from his lip. "I ordered Leopold to steal secrets from the Martinez family."

Percival's face darkened, his restraint barely keeping a second punch at bay.

Vance continued, "But Leopold's current predicament is his own doing. The Martinez family caught on to him because he deliberately exposed himself!"

Percival's second punch, it turned out, could not be held back after all.

When faced with the choice between stealing state secrets and the trajectory of his own future, he chose to protect the nation's assets.

The ironclad rule at Vanguard Agency was obedience; commands were to be followed without question, and he had not broken this rule.

But he would never allow himself to engage in espionage, to betray Griffin.

Such actions would violate not only the code of a Vanguard Agency operative but also the pledge he made to the one he held dear.

He would rather face trial than actually commit theft against the state.

'The guy's a fool. He should have never taken on such a mission. If he'd told me sooner, I'd never have let things get this far,'" Percival thought to himself. Content belongs to Dramanovels.com

Percival, too weary to raise a fist, demanded, "You gave the orders. Why are you off the hook?"

Vance took a breath. "Because my boss saved me. But Leopold, I could not do anything for him."

Percival's grip tightened, "You think you're fit to be the director?"

Vance did not deny it, recognizing the truth in Percival's words.

A director who could not save his men and kept secrets could hardly be convincing.

Chapter 575

The phone connected almost instantly.

Percival's voice cut through the line with a chill, "This is Deputy Director Percival of Rivenwood

Vanguard Agency headquarters. My third squad leader, Leopold, is currently detained at a military

prison and is set for trial tomorrow morning. I'm requesting a delay in the trial. Director Vance has

unanswered questions. I repeat, postpone Leopold's trial. Director Vance has unanswered questions!"

Without waiting for a response, Percival sharply ended the call and whipped out his tablet to connect

with the Sea City main office.

If Leopold was still on the docket for trial tomorrow, Percival would not hesitate to storm the military

prison himself.

The message was sent to the public channel, clear for all of Vanguard Agency to see.

Outrage rippled through the ranks.

Leopold was merely carrying out orders from the higher-ups, and now they wanted to let him take the fall? That was not going to fly.

If this was how things were going to be, who would lay their life on the line for Vanguard Agency?

The collective anger forced the main office to reschedule Leopold's trial hastily and mute all agents on the public channel to prevent further uproar.

But the cat was out of the bag, and the situation was spiraling beyond control. Whether it was the main office or Vance himself, somebody had to give an explanation.

"Percival, is it worth risking your career over this?" Vance asked.

Percival's face remained stoic as he pocketed his tablet. "I've never cared about my career," he replied sharply.

He sank into a chair and pulled out his phone to text Vivienne, updating her on Leopold's predicament.

Then, eyes fixed on Vance, he pressed on, "I've got plenty of time, Vance. Ready to spill the beans yet?"

Vance, masking his discomfort, got up from the floor and took a seat on the couch. "Before I took this position, I was given a mission. My superiors wanted me to secure the bioweapon research from the

Martinez family to let Vanguard Agency develop it. With your years here, you should know that one of the two factions within the agency is linked to the ancient warrior lineage. Your ascension to deputy director is thanks to the support from the Perez family.

The other faction is the core of the Vanguard Agency itself. While complementary, their roles differ.

Now, we're looking to merge the ancient warrior lineage with Vanguard Agency's core. Does that clear things up?"

A scornful laugh escaped Percival. "Since when did Vanguard Agency turn into thieves?"

Vance shrugged, clearly uncomfortable with the notion himself. "I know it's wrong, but orders are orders. We're just the executors. It's the top brass who decides."

Percival adjusted his cufflink. "Which top brass? I want a meeting."

"You're not yet qualified," Vance said bluntly. "This is beyond me. If you want to save Leopold, you'll have to deal with the ancient warrior lineage. I'm powerless here."

Percival narrowed his eyes. "Stealing Griffin's prototype bomb 'Morning Glory' that ended up on the market, and now this heist? You seem quite adept at these undertakings."

Vance was stunned for a moment. "I admit I took 'Morning Glory' from Griffin for this cause, but how did it end up on the market?"

Percival's suspicion deepened. Vance's reaction did not seem feigned.

Was he unaware that 'Morning Glory' ended up aboard the Ashford family's yacht?

Vance's expression grew tense. "Clarify your statement. Which market exactly did 'Morning Glory' end up? Is there a connection to GTO?"

"Go ask your superiors. You're just the executor, right?" Percival shot back, dismissively exiting the office.

If Vance would not reveal the so-called top brass, Percival would find out himself.

...

The Perez Mansion.

Vivienne had just arrived.

Maddox and Yuri were sparring in the yard when they noticed her. Maddox grinned, "Hey, niece, come judge for us. Loser takes out the trash tomorrow morning!"

Jasper, who was watching from the sidelines, noticed Vivienne's troubled expression. "Zelda, Diana,

take Natalia and Yasmine inside."

Quick to pick up on the tension, Zelda scooped up Natalia, and Diana gently pulled Yasmine away.

Before leaving, Diana cast a worried glance back at Vivienne, concerned about her unexpected visit.

The yard fell silent as Maddox and Yuri's playful bout came to an abrupt halt.

"Vivienne, what's the matter?"

She could act recklessly to save Leopold, but that was not what he would have wanted.

As his senior, she had to do everything in her power to help him within the bounds of honor.

Jasper's brow furrowed with concern. "Kid, this is no trifling matter. How can you be so certain your

junior is innocent?"

Vivienne skimmed through the message Percival had sent her before handing it off to Jasper.

"Percival's confronted Vance. It's all been orchestrated by him."

Jasper nodded in agreement. "Looks like Leopold's been made the scapegoat."

Vivienne paused, and then realization dawned. "Is Vance after the Martinez family secrets to crack

open the ancient warrior lineage?" New chapter available on Dramanovels.com

No wonder Griffin had been detained. The Martinez family was trying to protect one of their own, avoiding a deeper investigation.

With Leopold on trial, everything could be pinned on him, letting everyone else off the hook.

Vivienne slammed her palm down, shattering the stone table in the courtyard. "Vance dares to throw my junior to the wolves. He's really asking for trouble!"

Jasper understood Vivienne's rage and signaled Yuri to bring some ointment for her. "Kid, go do what you need to. I've got your junior's back; he won't face any harm. I'll make sure he's reinstated."

Vivienne nodded, her next move clear in her mind. She needed to uncover Vance's true intentions and expose whoever was backing him with that 'get out of jail free' card.

Chapter 576

The phone at the main office of Vanguard Agency in Sea City rang.

"Percival, do you have any idea what you've done? If this undermines our troops' morale, can you handle the consequences?"

The person questioning Percival was Director Webster, the director of Vanguard Agency's main office and Vance's immediate boss.

Percival's response was cool and indifferent. "So letting my guys get shot for no good reason doesn't

affect morale?"

Webster let out a heavy sigh. "If you have a grievance, you take it up with the agency. How can you just take matters into your own hands? Leopold's case has been decided."

"And who's Vance's direct superior? He assigned this mission. Shouldn't he be the one to give us an explanation?" Percival was tired of beating around the bush with Webster.

It was the same old song and dance, not solving anything. If Webster was calling personally, it meant he was not involved.

That left the bigwig behind the scenes – someone even Webster had to treat with kid gloves.

"I know you've got beef with Vance, and yes, he gave Leopold the order, but someone's got his back.

The main office has warned him sternly, and he's cut off from ever returning to the main office. For his career, that's a dead end. You're young, Percival. Think before you act."

Realizing Webster was dodging the real issue, Percival snapped back, "If I don't get an explanation, I'll come to the main office myself."

"You..." Webster sighed again, playing dumb. "Whatever is going on, it's above your pay grade. Just

help Vance manage things in Rivenwood and focus on GTO. GTO's been quiet; stay sharp. That's all."

With that, Webster hung up.

Percival gripped the receiver, a storm brewing in his eyes, swearing that he would drag the person

behind this into the light one day.

He had a gut feeling that this person was tied to the traitor within Vanguard Agency.

Then, Vivienne called. Percival picked up.

"Vance is after the ancient warrior lineage," she said, her voice urgent. "I'm on my way."

Percival frowned, but before he could reply, Vivienne hung up.

She arrived in no time, and they went straight to Vance.

Vance, mid-call with Webster, saw Vivienne and Percival and had no choice but to cut it short.

"Seems like we're meeting each other a lot lately, huh?" Vance stood, inviting them to sit on the couch,

his demeanor as calm as if nothing had happened.

"Code name 'Rover', your boss, right?" Vivienne sat down, her arched eyebrow icy.

Vance's brow furrowed slightly. "What are you getting at?"

Though he kept his cool outwardly, inside, he was shocked. Vivienne had uncovered the code name

'Rover' – something even Percival, deep in the ranks of Vanguard Agency, could not have known.

Vivienne's capabilities were not to be underestimated.

"Rover isn't listed as active in the main office or any other branch. He must be retired now. Yet, he can still pull strings to save your skin, giving you a 'get out of jail free' card. I underestimated him."

Vance's eyes hardened as he faced Vivienne with a solemn expression as if he was ready to silence her anytime. "What exactly are you trying to say?"

Percival stepped in front of Vivienne, his hand reaching for his gun as a warning to Vance. "Don't move another inch."

But Vivienne calmly pushed Percival's hand away, unafraid of Vance's threats. "You had Frostfire

Intelligence Agency investigate Ulysses, sabotaged the Martinez family through Leopold, and now you want to use me to get close to the Perez family – all to get to the ancient warrior lineage!"

Busted, Vance dropped the act.

"Yes, I'm after the ancient warrior lineage," Vance admitted, leaning back on the sofa. "Vivienne,

Ulysses is your mentor, Finnian, right?"

Vivienne did not respond, which Vance took as confirmation.

"I need to find him because my family can't handle the curse of the Mystic Vein anymore. The Sheldon family's massacre had nothing to do with us, yet we're the ones suffering the consequences. How is that fair?"

Vance was visibly agitated, his hands clenched in frustration.

Vivienne watched him closely, wondering if Vance's hunt for the ancient warrior lineage had any connection to that call he made to Karen back in the day.

"You guys should have done your homework on the Edwards family. A little digging and you'd know that none of the Edwards ever met a good end," Vance said, his gaze dropping. "Including my folks. They died in agony, and not even the top doctors in the world could pin down why. It's all tied to the Sheldon family's Mystic Vein!"

Vivienne lifted her eyes. Of course, she had looked into the Edwards family.

Vance's parents had succumbed to a mysterious illness, as he said, without any apparent cause. They deteriorated rapidly, and by the time they passed, their lower halves were completely necrotic.

"What's the connection, then, between the Martinez family and the other ancient warrior lineages?"

Vivienne inquired.

Vance's voice grew more fervent, his eyes even reddening. "Those ancient warrior lineage members, with their little tricks, spread evil wherever they go. Why can't I take them down?"

Vivienne watched him, sensing his hatred for the ancient warrior lineages was deeper than she could have imagined.

If Vance was indeed the traitor in the Vanguard Agency, was the call he made to Karen because he knew she was Sasha Perez? Content belongs to Drqmanovels.com

Looking at Vance, Vivienne asked, "What does my mother have to do with the ancient warrior lineages? And what was that phone call about?"

Vance paused, a suspicious look crossing his face. "What are you talking about? How did we get to Lark?"

"Do you dare say you've kept nothing from my mother, that your record is clean?" Vivienne pressed, her tone icy.

Vance licked his lips, his frown deepening. "I'm not your dad. What would I have to hide from your

mom? What reason would I have not to be clean?"

After a moment, realization dawned on Vance.

Chapter 577

Vivienne lifted her hand with a delicate motion, her fingertips brushing against Vance's.

The contact sent a jolt of pain through Vance's finger, causing him to slump back onto the couch, but

his eyes remained locked on Vivienne with intensity. "Sure, Lark and Ashen Pigeon and I didn't see eye

to eye, but our beef was strictly professional. I have no reason to off her, so show some respect, will

ya?"

His agitation caught Vivienne off guard. She had obviously struck a nerve.

Still cradling his wrist, Vance stared at her, "Neither you nor Micah have any ground to suspect me. I

admit I've got a grudge against the ancient warrior lineages, and I use my job to dig around. But as an

agent of Vanguard Agency, from field operative to the director I am today, I've honored every mission

and every badge I've ever worn on my uniform!

Look, Vivienne, Percival, you can accuse me of neglect, of not caring about the future and safety of my

agents, but you can never question my commitment to Vanguard Agency!"

In Percival's eyes, Vance was far from a model director. In fact, he did not even deserve the title.

Sacrificing his own people for personal gain, landing them in military prison while acting like nothing happened, seeing them meet their ends without lifting a finger... Such a man did not inspire Percival's respect.

But he could not deny the truth in Vance's words.

The room fell silent for a few minutes, with no one speaking.

After some time, Vance's emotions seemed to stabilize. "My mission for the Frostfire Intelligence Agency still stands. Next time you swing by, I expect news about your mentor."

It was a clear dismissal, and his tone was less than friendly.

Vivienne looked back at Vance.

He seemed to be shackled by his obsessions.

An obsession with the ancient warrior lineages, with the Sheldon family.

She had seen the medical records of Vance's parents before they died, which had nothing to do with some karmic cycle.

It was chronic lead poisoning—this lead was different, laced with unknown toxins and substances, lying

dormant in the body before finally manifesting and causing a violent death.

Vance was right to keep Darren and Ashley out of the Edwards Group affair. Perhaps the lead in his parents' blood was linked to the Mystic Vein.

In the early days of the Edwards Group, Vance's folks often returned to the Mystic Vein, and they were frequently taken to court over sick or dead workers.

It was only after the Edwards Group secured hefty health insurance for their workers that the issue was quelled.

That Mystic Vein was definitely problematic. However, Vance's parent's deaths were certainly not due to karma. The matter was only draped in a shroud of mystery because of the Sheldon family's line of work.

In a way, Vance was indeed a pitiable man.

"Next time we meet, I hope you've got more to spill about Rover. Otherwise, you can kiss any chance of finding my mentor goodbye!"

Rover was Vivienne's last target.

An enigma, always blurry in photos, leaving no trace in the entire Vanguard Agency.

If Jasper had not sensed him stepping in for Vance, Vivienne would have had nothing on him.

Vance snapped at her, "What do you want to know about Rover? Vivienne, your mom's death was suicide. It's got nothing to do with anyone in Vanguard Agency, least of all Rover. He was more torn up about it than anyone else. Stop being so paranoid!"

Vivienne did not respond, but Percival stepped in front of her, blocking Vance's view. "Keep your ancient warrior lineage feud out of the agency. I'm not letting this slide, not this time."

With that, Percival led Vivienne out. She did not resist, following him to his car.

As Percival started the engine, the calm of the night surrounded them. "Vivienne, the Finnian situation... I don't think Vance is involved."

"Why do you say that?" She asked.

Percival handed her his phone. "Our mystery friend sent the info here."

She took the phone, and sure enough, it was that mystery contact.

[Vance only cares about the ancient warrior lineage.]

Vivienne frowned. "Last time, she warned me to watch out for Vance; now, suddenly, it's all good? Is

she playing me?"

As Vivienne grew more certain of who this mysterious person was, her anger towards her only grew.

She had lied to her for years! And she had always been right there, beside her!

Percival ruffled her hair. "She must have her reasons for doing what she's done."

Vivienne exhaled, gazing out the window at the bustling streets, her bright eyes scanning every face.

Not one familiar figure to confront, to demand answers from.

Why? Why all this?

It took her a moment to collect herself. "Let's go find Finnian."

Percival responded with a nod and turned the car around, heading to the house he had prepared for

Finnian earlier.

Vivienne called Finnian over, and by the tone of her voice, he knew something was up. Not wanting to

delay, he put down his cutlery and rushed over.

He sighed to himself, wondering what was even the point of having an apprentice.

"Kiddo, what's up? Did Percival give you a hard time? Need me to knock him down a peg for ya?"

Finnian strolled in with a grin, a strawberry cheesecake in hand, ready to cheer up his apprentice.

Vivienne gestured with her chin towards the couch across from her, signaling for Finnian to take a seat.

Finnian handed the strawberry cheesecake to Percival, who silently took it and began cutting it into bite-sized pieces, making it easier for Vivienne to eat.

"What's the deal with your family's Mystic Vein? Is it toxic?" Vivienne inquired. New chapter available on Dramanovels.com

But with proper protection, there should not be any issues.

The folks at Edwards Group were not fools; how could they overlook this?

"What antidote?" Vivienne pressed.

Finnian reached into his pocket and placed a small porcelain bottle on the table. "This one."

Chapter 578

Vivienne popped the cork from the porcelain vial and held it to her nose, inhaling deeply. It was not any ordinary medicine she was familiar with.

Her gaze lifted slowly, locking eyes with Finnian.

"Yes, it's our family's secret recipe. Only Sheldons know how to concoct it," Finnian said, his excitement palpable.

Vivienne gave him a scrutinizing look. Knowing Finnian's true nature, even if he did not want to have anything to do with the Edwards family, even if he wished they would just wither away, he would not ignore the plight of the innocent workers.

He would not stand by with an antidote in hand and watch them die.

Finnian seemed to anticipate her question and volunteered the information. "I once gave the formula to someone from the Edwards family, Vance's grandfather specifically, but the old man did not take it seriously. Then, I was chased all over the place and took refuge up in the Emerald Mountains. I lost touch with the Edwards' affairs, and it was left at that."

Back in the day, Finnian, or Ulysses as he was known in his family, had fled from a home tragedy.

During his escape, he learned that the Edwards family had acquired Mystic Vein's mining rights.

Aware of the dangers of Mystic Vein, he passed the antidote formula to Vance's grandfather.

But this very act revealed his whereabouts, leading to a relentless pursuit by other ancient warrior lineages.

Finnian had thought Vance's grandfather would heed the warning. Unfortunately, it did not make any difference in the end.

For years, Finnian had been dodging assassins from the ancient warrior lineages, and it was only after

faking his death that he discovered Vance's parents had died due to the Mystic Vein's excavation.

Only then did he realize that the Edwards family had ignored the antidote altogether.

But it was too late. He could not find Vance or save the workers any other way.

Vivienne nodded. "So, the Edwards family sealed their own fate. But Finnian, did you use your alias to

strike a deal with the Edwards Group to sell those gas masks to save their miners?"

Finnian choked, incredulous that she had found out. He had carefully avoided all of Vivienne's

informants!

Wait a minute!

There was someone else.

Finnian's eyes gradually shifted to Percival, who was slicing a cake. Feeling the sharp gaze, Percival

looked up and returned a beaming smile.

Inwardly, Finnian cursed Percival.

He should have known it was this rascal Percival!

The Ellington Group held a significant place in the business world, so uncovering a small detail like the gas masks was no surprise.

Vivienne tapped the table. "Finnian, don't forget you owe me 80 million dollars. Are you trying to skip out on your debt?"

Seeing Vivienne's sly grin, Finnian knew he could not keep his secret any longer.

"Alright, alright, I'll pay you back, okay? But let's be clear: once I pay off that debt, you can't take over my company and still claim I owe you eighty million!"

Vivienne extended her hand. "Let's start with the shares of your company."

Finnian grimaced, reluctantly pulled out his phone, and stepped outside to make a call.

Ten minutes later, Vivienne's phone confirmed that she was now the owner of a medical supply company.

"So, can I have my IOU now?" Finnian said as he sat back down, eyeing Vivienne.

Instead of an answer, Vivienne merely smiled, and even Percival, who had finished slicing the cake, looked on nonchalantly.

Finnian blinked and then realized what was happening. He punched the two figures before him, but

instead of a human reaction, both robots opened their mouths and, like the previous synthetic human, spat out two scrolls.

[Finnian, this is a gift for you.]

[The IOU will wait until I've collected eighty million.]

Taking a deep breath, Finnian found himself laughing. "That cunning girl, always full of surprises." He dipped his finger into the cake's icing and popped it into his mouth, only to spit it out immediately.

"Blimey! Why's it so spicy?"

Upon closer inspection, he realized that it was not the cake he had brought in but a fake one!

"Vivienne! You just wait! You little rascal!"

Fuming, Finnian carried the two synthetic humans back home and dumped them in front of Vesper.

"Look at this!"

Vesper, who was immersed in a book, could not help but smile at the sight of the two machines.

"That girl's got spunk," Vesper said approvingly.

Finnian sighed. "So, it's just me against the world now, is it?"

"You could say that." Vesper chuckled, pinching the cheek of 'Vivienne'. But his expression suddenly turned grave.

Finnian was still mourning the loss of his company when he saw Vesper swiftly erasing his traces.

"What's happened?" Finnian asked, confused.

Vesper's brow furrowed. "Your apprentice has tricked you. These synthetic humans, they're bugged with trackers!"

With that, Vesper hurriedly made his escape.

In the meantime, the real Vivienne was sitting in her car, savoring a strawberry cake.

"Hmm, not quite as good as Mr. Wolf's, but still delicious," She thought.

Indeed, strawberry cake was the best thing in the world.

Percival watched Vivienne's delighted face and could not help but marvel at the power of money.

Truly a little miser at heart.

As Vivienne ate, she glanced at her watch and said, "Paused for three minutes, and now it's moving again?"

Percival set off in pursuit of the signal, but Vivienne shook her head. "Wait, that's one of the old man's

decoys!"

She sent the coordinates of the moving tracker to Matthew. Soon after, he called back, panting,

"Vivienne, I've been chasing this wild goose for nearly two miles! I'm beat!" Updated at

Dramanovels.com

So, the crafty old fox thought he could send them on a wild goose chase?

"Alright, clock out." Vivienne ended the call and joined Percival in knocking on the imposing front door.

The door swung open, revealing a robot butler with an uncustomized face.

As soon as it saw Vivienne, alarms blared, "Red alert, red alert, the brat is here, the brat is here!"

Percival chuckled under his breath, but the sight of Vivienne's darkening scowl made him swallow his amusement.

Finnian rushed over, his surprise evident. "Holy smokes, how on earth did you find this place?"

"Don't play dumb with me. Where's Vesper?" Vivienne demanded.

Finnian shrugged nonchalantly. "How should I know? But if you're looking for him, I might be able to set up a meeting."

Chapter 579

Vivienne had no patience for Finnian's games. She'd scoured his mansion, inside and out, finding nothing more than a bunch of unused robots, a dog, and two cats – but no trace of what she was really after.

"Damn it," she muttered under her breath, feeling like a fool for being played yet again.

Finnian, leaning against the wall with a smug look, said, "Sweetheart, you're gonna have to clean up this mess you've made. Look at this chaos!"

"Why don't you let Fido do it?" Vivienne snorted, snatching the apple Finnian was about to bite into right out of his hand as she stormed out.

Once she was gone, Finnian checked his surroundings for any "threats" before pulling out his phone to text Vesper, [Where are you?]

[I'm at Willa's.] Vesper replied, pocketing the phone. In the span of moments, he had changed into a woman.

The mirror reflected a cascade of soft locks over her shoulders, the sharp lines of her face now softened.

She had not undergone any dramatic disguise, just manipulated her facial bones slightly, which was

painful enough for her not to change back to this real face frequently.

But for this meeting, a male guise would not do.

She brushed her hair and changed into comfortable jeans and a tee, then knocked on the neighboring door.

Puzzled, Willa opened the door to find a stunning woman smiling back at her. "You are?"

"Willa, it's been ages," the woman said with a smile.

Willa peered into the woman's eyes, sensing an answer she dared not voice. She stepped back, overwhelmed.

The woman tapped Willa's forehead and playfully flicked her nose. "Don't recognize me, huh? I barely recognized you, too."

Tears instantly welled up in Willa's eyes at the familiar gesture.

"Sasha!" she cried, rushing into the woman's arms.

That was Sasha's signature move – whenever Willa made a mistake as a child, Sasha would "punish" her like that before taking the blame in front of Jasper.

"Sasha feels like a stranger's name now. Call me Karen now," Karen said soothingly, comforting Willa with gentle pats on the back.

Fortunately, Willa still remembered her. Otherwise, she would be at a loss.

Willa sobbed, a sight that would have shocked Maddox. He would never have believed the stoic Willa capable of tears.

Karen stayed by her side until Willa's crying subsided, and they could finally talk.

"Sasha, what did you mean earlier? Why does your own name sound unfamiliar to you? Where have you been all these years, and why haven't you come back to the Perez family? Dad's in Rivenwood, so is Yuri – why don't you come home? Dad misses you terribly."

Willa's grip on Karen's hand tightened as if afraid that letting go would cause her to disappear once again.

Karen did not resist. "I've seen Dad already," she said with a smile. "Yuri, his wife, Natalia and Yasmine – I've met them all, don't worry."

But Willa knew that meeting them was not the same as revealing her identity.

"Is there a reason you're not telling them the truth? Does it have to do with F-Poison?"

Karen neither confirmed nor denied. "My memory isn't fully back. That's why 'Sasha' feels distant. I

know I'm Sasha, but why I was kidnapped and ended up as another family's daughter remains a blank.

I don't remember who was behind it."

Willa's eyes narrowed. "Are you saying you have amnesia?"

"Yes," Karen admitted. "I remember bits – like ruining Grandpa's garden or chopping up Mom's lipstick

for 'experiments' – but many details escape me. I'm slowly recovering. It's just a matter of time."

Karen knew the injury to her head had been severe, and it had gone undetected for years until she

secretly matched her DNA with Yuri's during Vivienne's paternity test. That was when she discovered

she was Sasha and began to recall fragments of her life with the Perez family.

Before that, the memories of her childhood had been forcibly implanted through hypnosis. No wonder

she felt detached from her life before age ten – it was like hearing someone else's story.

Time had stretched long, and recovery was complicated. Too rapid a confrontation with the hypnosis

could cause irreversible brain damage.

Thus, Karen chose a conservative treatment, piecing together her past while investigating the Perez

family's secrets. After all, they were too guarded for an outsider to have kidnapped her without inside help.

Willa, sharp as ever, sensed from Karen's words that her abduction was more than a simple crime.

"Do you suspect anyone?" Willa asked.

Karen met her gaze. "What about you? Do you have any suspects?"

"Diana." Willa nodded.

"Me too," Karen agreed with a wry smile. "I remember being taken in summer. You were ill; Dad took you to the hospital, and Brothers were at school. Only Diana and I were at home. I don't remember anything after that. So, she's the prime suspect." Content of Dramanovels.com

"Absolutely, and let's not forget, my leaving home has a lot to do with Diana as well." Willa stood up, walked over to a drawer, and pulled out a sheaf of papers, handing them over to Karen.

Karen thumbed through the pages, her eyes narrowing as the implications sank in.

The document detailed Willa's origins.

Chapter 580

Karen's demeanor shifted, the undercurrent of anger pooling in her eyes becoming unmistakable. "With your stubborn streak, even if you had that document in your hands, you wouldn't show it to Dad or our

brothers. So, whether it's Dad's work or not, you wouldn't bother to ask."

"Yes," Willa admitted with a knowing smile. "Diana's well aware of how I tick. We've grown up together;

she knows I'd never let the cat out of the bag. That file – it's clear as day she prepped it just for me!"

Karen nodded in agreement. "Dad and our brothers, including me, we're all in on your true identity.

Compiling that document is pointless – we've kept you in the dark this long, so why would we suddenly

lay out the breadcrumbs for you?"

"But without hard evidence, we've still got quite the puzzle with Diana," Willa said, biting her lip. "And

then there's Vivienne's paternity test – it came back negative. Sasha, she is your flesh and blood,

right?"

"Absolutely, she's my little girl, my only one," Karen confirmed, pride lighting up her face despite her

attempt to mask it.

Willa chuckled. "Saw her picture. She's the spitting image of you, quite the stunner."

"She's sharp as a tack, too. Smart enough to drive me into your arms," Karen said, her voice tinged

with a mixture of exasperation and pride.

It was true. Her daughter was formidable. Once Vivienne found out she was still alive, she was clever enough to track her down.

Willa suddenly recalled something and said, "Sasha, those notes urging me to lay low... that was your doing, right?"

Karen nodded. "Yes. Vivienne's been looking for you. I was worried that the Perez family might be dangerous for you right now, so I figured it was best you stay hidden for the time being."

Willa agreed with Karen's caution.

With Diana lurking around Rivenwood, it was essential to understand her motives before returning. It was not just her safety at stake; it might also endanger Vivienne.

Diana must know Vivienne was the Perez family's granddaughter and would surely try to prevent her return.

Whether speculation or certainty, it was too risky to proceed without more information.

"Sasha, we need to dig into the past together, find this F-Poison, and bring him to justice!" Willa's resolve was palpable as she looked at Karen.

Being F-Poison's daughter did not mean she condoned his actions. Those inhumane deeds were

indefensible to Willa.

"F-Poison... not sure if he's still among the living," Karen mused, her gaze darkening. "The new F-Poison is a woman, which is curious."

Back when Karen was undercover in GTO, the leader had been a man. Now, a woman?

...

Ten days later.

Leopold returned to Vanguard Agency, reclaiming his post as the leader of the third squad.

Thomas landed a solid punch on him. "You damn dog, thought we'd lost you for good."

Soren joined in with a couple of jabs. "Stupid mutt, you scared us half to death."

Anna set off a sparkler with an expressionless face, deadpanning, "Welcome back, Husky!"

Leopold eyed the spent fireworks on the floor. "Anna, you could at least pretend to be happy to see me!"

When Percival approached, everyone snapped to attention.

Leopold saluted his superior. "Deputy Director, Squad Leader Leopold, code name Husky, reporting for

duty!"

Percival clapped him on the shoulder. "Vivienne said to give you a welcome and grant you a wish.

What will it be?"

Leopold grinned. "Can I get a new code name? German Shepherd sounds way cooler."

"You wish for Border Collie smarts?" Thomas scoffed.

Leopold shrugged off the tease. "Hey, it's Vivienne's promise. Deputy Director has to deliver."

Percival scratched his head. "Vivienne said she was kidding. Alright, back to formation. Training this

afternoon. Husky, make up for the training you missed the past month!"

Leopold groaned at the marching figure. "This is just unfair!"

The laughter from the Vanguard Agency operatives filled the air. Only Percival could handle Husky with such precision.

At this time, Vance's office doors opened, silence fell, and the earlier joviality vanished as if it had never been.

Leopold's lightheartedness froze. His brush with death lingered in his mind, and Vance was undoubtedly the culprit.

Vance approached Leopold. "Take some time off at home."

Leopold's response was icy. "No need for your concern, Director." Of course, he had no reason to show hospitality to someone who almost killed him.

Vance, aware of the animosity, wanted to tap his shoulders, but Leopold dodged. Helpless, he withdrew his hand, suggesting, "The Perez family saved you. Use your leave to thank them properly."

In the cutthroat world of Vanguard Agency, this was even more pronounced.

Percival watched from his office, a returned email on his screen – his tenth appeal to investigate

Vance, each one rejected without explanation.

Some powerful force was shielding Vance.

With a flick of the blinds, Percival turned away, his resolve unshaken.

If he truly wanted to root out the traitor within the Vanguard Agency, his current status would not cut it!

That evening, Thomas drove to the Perez Mansion, accompanied by Percival and Leopold.

"This Perez family really is something else, to just snap up such a grand estate," Leopold murmured in admiration. Content belongs to Drqmanovels.com

Thomas glanced sideways, a hint of irony in his voice, "As if your family's sprawling manor is any smaller."

Leopold chuckled, "Easy there, driver. Dial back that envy a notch, will you?"

With that, Leopold, carrying the gifts, stepped out of the car with Percival and walked in.

Thomas muttered a curse under his breath, parked the car neatly, and followed them.

Jasper let out a chuckle. "Ah, I can see a bit of your Uncle Maddox in him."

Leopold, now in front of them, suddenly dropped to one knee. "Sir, I, Leopold, am eternally grateful for your life-saving grace."