

Million-Dollar 581

Chapter 581

Zelda nearly dropped her whisk when Leopold came crashing down onto the cobblestone path with a thud.

“Blimey, Leopold, that’s flagstone, you absolute brute!” She exclaimed, still half-focused on perfecting her cake recipe.

Jasper could not help but chuckle at the scene. “Alright, alright, enough with the dramatics. Get up,” he said with a grin.

Leopold rose, shaking his head with a laugh and holding a gift box. “Well, Sir, these are some of your favorite things. I wasn’t sure what you’d like, so I just grabbed a bit of everything.”

Jasper’s smile widened. “You’re quite the character, kid. No wonder that Martinez girl fancies you so much. Speaking of which, aren’t you going to come out?”

Hearing this, Leopold froze, his feet suddenly as heavy as lead.

His heart stopped for a moment as if encased in ice.

Vivienne and Percival exchanged glances that did not need words; it was clear Leopold was in the dark.

Percival just shrugged. If he knew, would he have even shown up?

Thomas muttered under his breath, "Percival's as ruthless as ever."

Zelda, putting aside her baking tools, dragged Griffin out from the shadows. "No use hiding now, love.

It's not like you're being dragged to the altar."

Griffin Martinez stood at the threshold, her eyes cast down, her feet rooted to the spot.

Both of them were wracked with unspeakable thoughts and mutual guilt.

Vivienne nudged Leopold forward with a swift kick. "Snap out of it, will ya?"

Leopold stumbled into Griffin's space, and she looked up, her eyes rimmed with unshed tears, at a loss for words.

Zelda snickered and finally remembered to turn off the oven while she, along with Natalia and Yasmine, quietly exited the kitchen.

Percival and Vivienne ushered Jasper to the back garden, leaving the two frozen figures alone in their awkward silence.

A chill breeze caused Griffin to shiver slightly.

Leopold wordlessly took off his jacket and draped it over Griffin's shoulders, breaking the silence.

"When did you get back?"

"Yesterday," Griffin mumbled, "Dad said you were alright, so he let me come."

Before she could say more, she wrapped her arms around Leopold, her sobs muffled against his chest.

Leopold, taken aback, was not sure how to react.

After a while, Griffin pulled back slightly, sniffing. "Couldn't you try to comfort me just a bit?"

Leopold had never seen Griffin cry. In his impression, Griffin had always been the woman who was

either forcing him to marry her, chasing after him on a motorbike, or swinging his custom-made whip at

those thugs.

Panicking a little, he blinked in surprise. "You cry?"

Griffin took a deep breath and kicked him in the shin, annoyed. All the tears she had shed for him when

he was captured, and he was clueless!

"Ouch!" Leopold yelped, rubbing his leg.

Her anger melted away as she saw Leopold's comical attempt to stand on one leg, and she could not

help but laugh.

Leopold looked up to see her smile through the tears.

At that moment, he vowed never to make her cry again.

Standing tall, he took her hand in his. "Smile more, it suits you."

Griffin's heart skipped a beat as she held his gaze, her hand burning in his.

She had never doubted Leopold's innocence, and she was glad her unwavering trust in him was not misplaced.

She embraced him again, burying her face in the curve of his neck. "I'm just so relieved you're okay, Leopold."

Leopold raised his hands, hesitating before wrapping them around her.

Griffin took his hands and pulled them around her waist, holding him close.

From their hiding spot, Vivienne rolled her eyes. "Hopeless," she muttered.

Natalia sighed. "Yeah, he seems pretty hopeless. Our dad's way better at this. He always hugs Mom first.

Yasmine echoed, "Yeah. Especially at bedtime, he never lets us sleep in the middle..."

Zelda quickly covered their mouths before they could reveal any more family secrets.

Jasper and Vivienne shared a laugh at the young couple's expense.

“Vivienne, let’s go for a stroll, shall we? I could use some fresh air,” Jasper said as he stood up from his wheelchair, Vivienne immediately at his side.

Diana also reached out to help but was a step too late.

With a tight grip on her own hands, Diana watched Vivienne walk away with Jasper, her frustration simmering.

At this moment, Diana was even more certain that Vivienne would be her biggest obstacle in the Perez family.

Zelda scooped up the children. “Come on, Percival, let’s join them. The others will be back soon.”

Percival nodded in agreement. Jasper must have wanted to talk to Vivienne privately, and he would not intrude on that.

Natalie and Jasmine clung to Percival, who did not seem to mind the attention.

After all, what girl did not have a thing for a handsome guy?

With a resigned chuckle, Zelda followed them out, shaking her head.

Through it all, no one had bothered to talk to Diana.

Her fingers dug into her palms with suppressed anger. Updated at Drąmanovels.com

“Vivienne, I swear I won't let you get your way!”

Meanwhile, Vivienne strolled with Jasper amid the fragrant blooms in the estate's backyard.

"Vivienne, I heard from Maddox that you went to see Flynn Ellington the other day," Jasper asked.

Vivienne nodded. "Yes, I heard he's F-Poison's apprentice. I had a lot of questions for him."

Vivienne looked puzzled. "Grandpa, what exactly has Flynn done?"

Vivienne racked her brain before the memory clicked, "Yes, I remember. Was the child ever found?"

Chapter 582

Vivienne had thought she was doing Paula a kindness when she sent her to meet Arabella on Jericho

Isle, suggesting Arabella was her long-lost daughter.

But that was a lie.

Who Paula's real daughter was, or where she might be, Vivienne neither knew nor cared to discover. It

was enough to let Paula believe she had been reunited with her daughter, to share in mutual suffering.

Jasper grunted. "We found her, alright, but it was too late. She was barely recognizable as a human. By

the time we got to her, both her kidneys were gone. She didn't last long after that."

Vivienne recalled that the Brooks family once asked CK to find Paula's daughter. Little did they know that CK was the very culprit of the disappearance of Paula's daughter.

"Flynn spent years using his botanist cover to hunt for targets at universities abroad, amassing wealth for CK, while Fiona managed the operations back home. Using the Ellington family's name, they covered up many crimes."

After handing Flynn over to the Perez family, Vivienne had stopped inquiring into his affairs. It was mainly to spare Percival from reopening old wounds.

The extent of Flynn's cruelty had surpassed even Vivienne's imagination. But then again, as a disciple of F-Poison, how could he be anything but vicious?

Jasper chuckled. "Did he tell you he wants to meet someone from the Perez family?"

"Yes, he probably wants to see F-Poison's daughter." Vivienne shared her thoughts with Jasper.

Jasper nodded in agreement, "Too bad he won't get to see Willa, but there are others in the Perez family he can meet. How about we go see them together tomorrow?"

Vivienne's gaze flickered, sensing that Jasper seemed to know everything.

Jasper looked at her with a gentle tap on her head, "Vivienne, I know. Our bond is unbreakable."

Vivienne felt a lump in her throat. She had been right. Jasper knew everything but kept silent for her safety, never acknowledging their relationship openly.

With a choked sob, she nodded vigorously. "Yes, Grandpa. Our bond is unbreakable."

Jasper's smile deepened, clearing the mist from his eyes as he took her hand and continued their walk through the garden.

The following day, the entire Perez family visited the secret prison.

Vivienne stayed close to Jasper, and the others followed.

The poison in Flynn's system was flaring up, tormenting both his body and mind.

Everyone from the Perez family watched from outside the cell with eyes devoid of sympathy. This was the punishment he deserved.

Flynn writhed on the floor, sweating profusely, roaring like a wild beast.

Diana turned her head away, feeling nauseated by the sight.

After half an hour, Flynn's screams finally subsided.

Lying on the floor, he took a while to recover before sitting up nonchalantly, scanning the faces before him with a hollow laugh.

"Vivienne, you're quite capable, aren't you? Bringing everyone here?"

Vivienne lifted her chin in disdain, a smirk on her lips. "There's a certain charm in watching a monkey perform."

A flicker of rage crossed Flynn's face as he beat against the iron bars.

Of course, no matter how he vented his anger, he could not touch Vivienne.

"Your mother is dead, Vivienne, and soon it'll be your turn!" he spat.

Vivienne yawned indifferently. "Well, I'll be waiting."

Maddox, overhearing this, stepped forward and turned on the electric current to the bars.

Flynn's hands were clenched on the bars, and the sudden shock sent spasms through his body.

"Shut the fuck up," Maddox growled, itching to punch Flynn.

But Flynn, seemingly out of his mind, began to laugh hysterically. "You're Maddox, right? Perez family's third, fallen for the enemy's daughter, Willa? You've got some guts. And you, old man, aren't you going to stop him?"

Before Maddox could retort, Jasper intervened. "Willa is the child I raised. I'm proud of her. If she reciprocates the feelings for Maddox, I'd gladly give them my blessings. Flynn, what do you think your mentor would say if he knew his daughter would call her father's enemy 'Dad'?"

Vivienne laughed outright. Jasper's words were a sharp blade—gentle yet lethal.

It was clear how much F-Poison cared for Willa by Flynn's desperate desire to see her. Jasper's barb was aimed straight at F-Poison's heart and through him, his devoted disciple.

Enraged, Flynn stood up, "Shut up! Let Willa come to me!"

Jasper replied calmly, "Willa won't come to see you. She said if F-Poison dies, she will exhume his ashes if necessary to atone."

"This is all because of you!" Flynn shouted as his poison flared again, wracking his body with pain.

Tired of his ranting, Yuri pressed a button, and a hatch opened above Flynn's cell, drenching him with water.

Vivienne administered a mild antidote; they needed Flynn to be coherent enough to talk.

"Flynn, how exactly did you and your mentor abduct Sasha? Speak!" Yuri demanded.

Standing behind the group, Diana felt her insides twist in anxiety as she watched Flynn, unsure of what would come next.

If he really knew, what would she do?

It was her, after all, whose actions led to Sasha being snatched away!

No, no, there was no way F-Poison would bother telling Flynn.

This guy must be bluffing!

Jasper looked down. "Let's go."

Vivienne did not want to stay a moment longer.

Flynn's words were clearly nonsense.

It seemed that Flynn would not spill the truth without seeing Willa.

Diana also secretly breathed a sigh of relief at this moment. Flynn was just spewing nonsense; she seemed safe. Read at Dramanovels.com

She could not stand it any longer and was the first to step out.

Diana's legs went weak.

Flynn really knew everything!

Back then, after Diana had knocked Sasha out, those were the very words F-Poison had said to Sasha!

But now, there was Flynn!

Zelda steadied her. "It's okay, he can't get out. Let's leave."

Chapter 583

Diana was drenched in cold sweat, barely able to stand on her own. She clung to Zelda, who supported

her as they made their way out of the place.

Her mind was a mess.

What was she to do?

If Flynn, that lunatic, ever spilled the beans to the Perez family in one of his good moods, she would be

left with nothing!

Yes, she had to seek out F-Poison. That woman surely had a way to help her!

The members of the Perez family piled into their cars. Jasper, worn out, decided to leave early with

Diana and Zelda while Yuri took the wheel.

Vivienne naturally ended up riding with Maddox.

Maddox slammed his fist against the steering wheel in frustration. "Damn it, I really want to knock some

sense into that nutjob. What's he doing, spouting nonsense in front of the old man?"

Vivienne was not as upset.

She had thought Flynn was untouchable, but now it seemed he had a weak spot after all – Willa.

She could not understand it, though. Flynn did not even care about his father, so why would he care about his mentor's daughter?

Could there still be something they did not know about Willa?

Willa had grown up with the Perez family. What kind of secret could she possibly have? Plus, her personality was almost the complete opposite of her parents.

And why was Flynn so desperate to see Willa?

After returning from the visit to the prison, Diana claimed she was too tired and went straight to her room to rest, locking the door behind her.

Jasper was still worried. "Zelda, is Diana all right?"

Zelda shook her head. "She's just a bit shaken up, Dad. Don't worry, I've saved her some dinner. Let's let her rest for now."

"That's best. Thanks for your help."

Zelda offered a faint smile, her gaze towards Diana's room dark and unreadable.

She was not particularly close to Diana but knew that Diana was not the type to scare easily. It was just a few words; how could they have shaken her up so badly?

That night, Diana slipped out through the back window. Being an adopted daughter of the Perez family, she was well-versed in martial arts.

Since most of the Perez family had already retired for the night and paid no attention to her, nobody noticed her departure.

F-Poison had moved to a new residence, and Diana had to follow the GPS to find her way there.

"What the hell is going on with Flynn? Isn't he the former F-Poison's apprentice? Why does he know about Sasha being kidnapped? You better start talking and tell me what's happening!" Diana demanded as soon as she burst through the door.

F-Poison was in the midst of a peaceful painting session and set down her brush upon hearing Diana's words.

"Have you met Flynn already?" asked F-Poison.

Frantic, Diana knocked over F-Poison's brushes in her haste. "Yes, I have. Now tell me what this is all about!"

F-Poison frowned at her toppled brushes, her eyes darkening. "Pick them up."

Diana paused, confused. "What are you talking about? I did what you asked and met with Flynn. You never mentioned he knew about Sasha. You..."

Before she could finish, F-Poison grabbed her throat.

"Pick. Them. Up." F-Poison hissed menacingly.

Struggling to breathe, Diana nodded hurriedly, and F-Poison released her, tossing her to the floor.

Diana obediently gathered the brushes and stepped back. "Can we talk properly now?"

"Ms. Perez, take a seat," F-Poison said with a slight curl of her lips, holding a glass of red wine as she lounged on the sofa.

Diana took a moment to compose herself before sitting down opposite F-Poison.

F-Poison sipped her wine and asked, "Ms. Perez, what exactly did Flynn say? Would you indulge me?"

Diana recounted Flynn's words, not expecting F-Poison to burst into laughter.

After her amusement subsided, F-Poison said, "It seems my hunch was right, Ms. Perez. I can help

you deal with Vivienne now."

Diana blinked in surprise. "What are you talking about?"

F-Poison's eyes gleamed. "I'm saying I can help you take care of Vivienne. You don't want your father to find out who she really is, do you?"

"Of course not!" Diana frowned. "But why are you agreeing to this all of a sudden? Are you saying that as long as Flynn is alive, you can help me?"

F-Poison nodded. "Exactly. And your father probably already suspects that Vivienne is his biological granddaughter. If we don't act now, it'll be too late."

"How could that be? Didn't you alter the paternity test for me?" Diana exclaimed in shock.

"Your father isn't naive. He has his ways. Besides, there's always a difference between biological and adopted children. They share a connection. Otherwise, you wouldn't be so eager to get rid of Vivienne, right?"

F-Poison's words struck a chord with Diana. "How will you help me?"

F-Poison produced a packet of powder from a drawer. "Just make Vivienne ingest this, and she's as

good as dead."

Diana scoffed. "Don't forget, Vivienne is the Specter Healer, capable of mending the dying and the dead. Do you really think such simple poison will work on her?"

F-Poison smiled confidently. "This powder is undetectable, even to her."

"Are you that sure?" Diana pressed.

"Absolutely, just as sure as I am that Flynn will never reveal the true story behind Sasha's kidnapping.

Are you reassured now?"

Diana looked into F-Poison's masked face, unable to discern her true intentions. But having already chosen to dance with the devil, she had to live with the unsettling risks.

It did not matter. As long as Vivienne could be eliminated, everything else was irrelevant.

Diana grabbed the powder and left.

F-Poison, wine in hand, turned to gaze at her unfinished painting, contemplating her next move.

Long days had passed, and honestly, she could barely remember her own reflection.

She stood up and strode over to the painting, her movements as fluid as the wine from her glass that she splashed across the canvas in a fit of artistic abandon.

Jasper grunted in response, "Good, good. It's about time I caught up with Finnian. Last time, the boy flew out of here like a bat out of hell."

Vivienne could not help but smile at the remark.

Finnian and Ulysses being the same person was old news now. Even Vance could dig it out, so naturally, the Perez family was in the know.

Last time, Jasper had been too sick to reminisce about the good ol' days. Read at Dramanovels.com

This time around, he would not let Finnian off the hook so easily.

Diana emerged with a glass of juice for Vivienne and a cup of herbal tea for Jasper.

"Dad, have some water," she said as she handed him the tea, then turned to Vivienne with the juice.

"Here, Vivienne, this is for you."

"Thanks," Vivienne replied, accepting the glass.

"You're with family, dear. No need for formalities. Drink up. It's fresh-squeezed," Diana said before settling down to chat with Jasper.

Feeling parched, Vivienne took a generous gulp of the juice, but the tangy bitterness made her pause.

Something about the flavor seemed off.

Diana looked a tad guilty. "Is it too sour, Vivienne? I think I skimped on the sugar."

"It's fine," Vivienne assured her, though she could not quite shake the odd aftertaste.

Satisfied that Vivienne had not caught on to the spiked drink, Diana breathed a sigh of relief.

Chapter 584

At that moment, Maddox strode over.

"Dad, Finnian's brought Mr. Linklater over!"

Vivienne rose to her feet upon hearing this, a hint of urgency sparkling in her eyes.

"Vesper, at last, we meet!"

Seizing the moment, Diana hurriedly wiped up the remaining juice, tossing the glass into the sink to

obliterate any evidence of her actions.

Jasper also stood, leaning on his cane as he moved to greet the newcomer.

However, once outside, they found only Vesper.

"Where the hell is that old bastard Ulysses?" Jasper bellowed from the yard.

Vesper chuckled, "He's hiding."

Though he said this, his gaze drifted to the old banyan tree in the courtyard.

Understanding the hint, Jasper picked up a stone and hurled it at the banyan.

Finnian winced and poked his head out. "Jasper! Are you trying to kill me?"

"You've already died twice! What's once more?" Jasper retorted, lobbing another stone.

Finnian was not going down without a fight, plucking leaves from the tree and tossing them back at

Jasper.

The two old coots showed no mercy, each blow harder than the last.

Maddox and Yuri tried to intervene, tugging at each one, adding to the commotion.

Vesper quietly observed Jasper, finally easing up.

It seemed the thing inside him had stabilized.

He smiled to himself but then sensed a pair of searing glares.

Those eyes held resentment, fury, and longing.

Vesper dared not respond nor even glance that way.

He knew his daughter all too well.

Vivienne clenched her fists, cursing inside, "So, she won't even look at me? Fine, avoid me then!"

With that, Vivienne stormed over, determined to confront the face she had missed so much.

As Vivienne approached, every cell in Vesper's body tensed, ready to flee.

Now was not the time to reconcile with Vivienne.

Suddenly, Vesper caught an odd scent in the air, tracing it back to Vivienne.

His expression tightened, and he met her gaze head-on.

Vivienne paused, confused. Was she changing her mind?

Without warning, Vesper struck Vivienne's chest with lightning speed, too quickly for her to react.

The two feuding old men stopped and gathered around, clueless about what was happening.

Then, Vesper swiftly inserted several silver needles into Vivienne's scalp.

Overpowered, Vivienne expelled the juice she had just ingested.

Vesper breathed a sigh of relief.

"You're smart not to have drunk it all," Vesper said, retracting the needles.

Vivienne had sealed her pressure points the moment she sensed something off with the juice, planning to purge it once she left the Perez Mansion.

"What's this?" Vivienne demanded.

Before Vesper could reply, Diana rushed over and shoved him aside.

Caught off guard, Vesper was easily pushed away.

"What are you doing? What did Vivienne ever do to you?" Diana fumed at Vesper.

In reality, Diana acted to destroy the evidence, her feet covered in a substance that could neutralize the poison.

Vesper's eyes narrowed; Diana was definitely up to no good!

Vivienne stepped in front of Vesper. "That juice you gave me—it was poisoned!"

The crowd was taken aback, Jasper incredulous. "Diana, what's the meaning of this?"

"I... I have no idea. How could the juice be poisoned? Vivienne, you can't wrong me like this," Diana protested, her eyes brimming with tears.

Vivienne glanced at the expelled juice, her gaze hardening.

The evidence was gone.

She had underestimated this woman!

"Vivienne, are you certain about the poison?" Maddox asked quietly, positioning himself beside Diana,

ready to restrain her if needed.

Vivienne nodded. "Yes, I'm sure!"

Maddox instantly grabbed Diana. "Why would you do this, Diana? Speak!"

Diana struggled in vain against Maddox's grip, her martial arts no match for his.

"Maddox, I know you all care for Vivienne, but why not ask why I would poison her? Even if I didn't like

her, which I do, I wouldn't kill her," Diana cried out.

Maddox held Diana firmly. "You provided the juice. How do you explain that?"

Maddox signaled Yuri, who began to fetch the testing kit.

Vivienne intervened. "Uncle, there's no need for all this trouble. The poison's been dealt with, and since

Auntie Diana claims ignorance, I believe her."

"Vivienne!"

"Uncle Maddox, let her go. We're all family here." Vivienne shook her head at Maddox.

Reluctantly, Maddox released Diana, knowing that even a test would yield no results now.

Wiping her tears, Diana stated emphatically, "Vivienne, I'm not sure about the juice, but please, believe

me, I would never hurt you, I swear!"

Vivienne eyed Diana's woeful expression with a hint of scorn hidden beneath her gaze. There she was,

Diana, putting on an act that could rival the great performers.

It was a shame she had not pursued a career in acting.

A smirk tugged at Vivienne's lips. "Auntie Diana, as long as your conscience is clear, you don't owe me any promises."

Jasper furrowed his brow, discomfort tinging his features. "Diana, if there's nothing the matter, why don't you go ahead and get some rest?"

At that, Diana's eyes flickered with dismay. Jasper still did not trust her! Content belongs to

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It was as clear as day—the ties of blood and the bonds of adoption were worlds apart in his heart.

Diana pressed her lips together, a poised resignation in her voice. "Dad, I'll return to my room then."

As she spoke, Diana cast a fleeting glance at Vesper.

Who could have foreseen an unexpected obstacle? Vivienne had failed to detect the poison, yet

Vesper had effortlessly drawn it out.

Just who was he?

Vesper, too, raised his head, watching Diana in silence.

To think someone dared to poison his daughter. They must have a death wish!

But how did Diana come by such a poison?

Vesper's gaze dropped, contemplative. It appeared that Diana's ties with the GTO were far more

entangled than he had anticipated.

Chapter 585

Diana locked eyes with Vesper and felt a sudden tightness in her chest. Guilt washed over her, and she

quickly averted her gaze, scurrying back to her room.

Once inside, she realized she was drenched in a cold sweat, her fear palpable.

Then, the itch started. She scratched furiously, but it brought no relief. It felt as if a million tiny bugs

were crawling over her skin.

Soon after, a bone-chilling cold enveloped her as if she had plunged into an icy cavern.

Outside, Vivienne withdrew her hand, her cheeks as cool and expressionless as a winter's dawn.

She had not outright killed Diana because something about the situation perplexed her. In this world,

there was only one kind of poison that could elude her senses—Karen's poison.

And yet, Diana had somehow managed to get her hands on it.

Vesper, too, pulled back in silence.

Though it was not time to strike a lethal blow, ensuring Diana suffered a little was within Vesper's means.

Feeling the cold grip of winter amid the height of summer certainly had a certain appeal.

"Vivienne, I will get to the bottom of this. Your suffering won't be in vain," Jasper said, his features etched with concern.

Even if he trusted Diana would not do such a thing, it did not mean the juice Vivienne had been served was not poisonous.

Vivienne would never lie, and Vesper would not have forced the poison out without good reason.

"Grandpa, don't worry about me, I'm fine." Vivienne's smile was a feeble attempt to ease his worry. She would handle this herself.

"Dad, let me help you back inside. Mr. Linklater was supposed to—hey, where did Mr. Linklater go?"

Yuri looked around, perplexed by Vesper's sudden disappearance.

Vivienne turned, and sure enough, Vesper had vanished without a trace!

She had been unguarded last time, but this time, she was on high alert, and he still managed to slip away.

Jasper suddenly realized he had not heard Finnian's voice in a while. He turned around to find nothing but a grinning face carved onto an old banyan tree.

"That old codger, I'll get him one of these days!" Finnian cursed.

Vivienne reassured him. "Don't worry, Grandpa. I'll bring him back!"

With purpose, she set off in pursuit. She had planted a tracker on Vesper, and now it was moving in a certain direction.

But when Vivienne reached the crossroads, she discovered the tracker had split, moving in different directions.

Narrowing her eyes, she saw that together, the locations spelled out a message:

[Frost, you're still green!]

Fuming, Vivienne punched the wall, creating a spiderweb of cracks.

She knew she was nowhere near as powerful as her mother yet. She had to train harder.

One day, she would catch up to Karen.

In the shadows, Finnian gasped in awe, turning to Vesper and saying, "You're done for. Your girl's fuming. You won't have a single day of peace."

Vesper's lips curved in a smile, eyes twinkling as he looked at Finnian. "No worries. It's you who won't have a single day of peace."

It dawned on Finnian that although Vivienne could not find Karen, she could certainly find him!

"Like mother, like daughter!" Finnian snapped.

Karen's smile deepened. "Finnian, I learned from the best. Ta-ta!"

With that, she slipped away. She had more pressing matters to attend to—Diana had made contact with GTO, and there was nothing simple about that.

Meanwhile, at Vanguard Agency.

Percival typed the last word and printed the document. The bold title stared back at him, reflecting a profound reluctance in his eyes.

Taking a moment, he rose from his chair and made his way to the director's office.

Vance's face was a picture of surprise when he saw the papers in Percival's hand.

"Percival, are you sure you want to do this?" Vance frowned, searching Percival's eyes for a hint of jest.

But there was none.

Percival's gaze was icy as he affirmed, "Yes, I'm resigning."

Slamming the resignation letter on the desk, Vance paced the office, seething.

"Percival, do you realize what you're doing? I know you have issues with me, and you're still sore over

Leopold's case, but this is no reason to quit! Are you out of your mind?"

Vance pointed accusingly at Percival, unable to contain his anger.

Percival was a rare talent with a strategic mind and a commendable record in the field. He was the

youngest deputy director with a limitless future, spared even after almost causing a scandal—all

because he was valued.

But now, he wanted to resign.

If that was not madness, what was?

Percival's expression was stoic, his resolve clear in his eyes. "My decision is well-considered."

Vance's hands trembled in the air. If Percival were his apprentice, he would have slapped him by now.

Percival met Vance's gaze, ever calm as if nothing could disturb the peace of his features.

"I will deal with my mentor's issues and GTO in my own way. As for Micah, that's what I need to discuss with you next."

Vance paused, a look of suspicion crossing his face. He could not quite grasp what Percival was planning.

After a long pause, he finally began to speak in a measured tone, "What exactly are you trying to say?"

Facing Vance, he was different than before.

In the past, no matter how infuriated Percival was, he always interacted with Vance as the deputy director.

But now, he was more like a negotiator, speaking to Vance from a higher position.

This meeting had transformed into a negotiation with Percival's shift in demeanor.

"The reasons for my resignation are none of your concern. What you need to understand is that even if

I leave the Vanguard Agency, I will not abandon the investigation into GTO." New chapter available on

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"Elaborate," Vance said, easing back into his chair. As the patriarch of the Edwards Group in his public life, he was no stranger to negotiation.

Percival narrowed his eyes. "I want Micah reinstated to his former position."

"He's been a long-time rival of mine. I'll need a proper offer before I can agree," Vance replied.

Percival reached into his inner pocket and pulled out a business card that bore nothing but a name and a phone number.

Vance took it, a flicker of surprise in his eyes, "You're Mr. Percy!"

Mr. Percy, the enigmatic mastermind behind a powerful syndicate, was a man whose true identity and whereabouts remained a mystery to everyone.

Even the Vanguard Agency had failed to unravel the details of this elusive figure.

And now, it turned out to be Percival!

Chapter 586

Percival grinned with a hint of mischief. "Looking to delve into the secrets of the ancient warrior

lineages, are you? Well, I'm your guy. I'll be your greatest asset."

Vance placed the business card on the table, his finger tapping over the name Mr. Percy, and asked

with a serious tone, "So, you trust me now?"

Doubts about his alleged betrayal of the Vanguard Agency had always gnawed at him.

He did harbor ulterior motives, sure, but staining his hands with betrayal? That was a line he would not cross.

Percival's lips curved slightly. "Your obsession is solely with the ancient warrior lineages."

Vance fell silent, mulling over his options.

An alliance with Percival could indeed clear the fog shrouding the mysteries of the ancient warrior lineages.

But trust was not on the table, and their partnership was fraught with peril.

Now, cut off from the Agency's mainframe, he was blind to the secrets he sought. He needed an external ally.

"Why help me?" Vance finally asked.

Percival lowered his gaze briefly, then met Vance's eyes. "Your fixation with the ancient warrior lineages runs deep. I'd rather assist you now than risk others exploiting you later."

The insinuation stung Vance like a slap across the face.

"So, you and Vivienne still suspect I might betray the Agency!"

Percival did not deny it. "In my eyes, you were never the saint."

Vance was momentarily lost for words.

Indeed, in his pursuit of the truth behind the ancient warrior lineages, he had strayed from his initial path.

Conscience had become a distant echo, fading with time.

"And yet you choose to work with me. Aren't you afraid I might double-cross you?" Vance asked.

"You gave Leopold an out. That's the second reason I'm willing to gamble on you," Percival replied with a smirk.

Vance had ensured Leopold took the fall, yes, but had also arranged for his survival and, in the shadows, safeguarded Griffin, proving her innocence.

Perhaps he was not completely heartless after all.

Vance sighed heavily. "Fine. Since you've made up your mind, I'll submit your resignation."

"Bring Micah back before the end of next week, or our deal is off," Percival demanded, standing to leave.

Just as he reached the door, Vance called after him, "Percival, wherever you are, whatever you do, don't forget you were once an outstanding operative of the Vanguard Agency!"

A twinge of deep reluctance flickered across Percival's face.

Once he stepped through that door, he would no longer be a Vanguard Agency operative. Their ties would be severed forever.

Seconds later, he left without looking back, closing a chapter on his life at the Vanguard Agency.

Percival's resignation sent shock waves through the Rivenwood Vanguard Agency main office.

Everyone was in disbelief—how could their deputy director resign so abruptly?

Especially Soren, who seemed to question his own existence, bombarding Leopold for answers.

"Weren't you his brother-in-arms? You grew up together, and you don't know why he quit?" Soren's eyes were red with disbelief.

Equally blindsided, Leopold could not fathom Percival leaving the organization they had aspired to enter since their teens.

"I told you, I don't know! Cut it out!" Leopold snapped, pushing Soren away.

Their pent-up frustrations exploded into a scuffle, which Thomas and Anna quickly broke up.

"Enough!" Thomas bellowed.

Soren turned his anger on Thomas. "And you? As his assistant, you must know something!"

"How the fuck would I know? I got the news at the same time as you did!" Thomas retorted, equally heated.

Anna kicked the three men. "Will you guys stop? As the team leader and commander, shouldn't you be calming your teams down? Have you forgotten what the deputy director told us?"

The three finally regained their composure, with Thomas taking the lead to gather the troops and Leopold and Soren attending to their responsibilities.

Meanwhile, Percival drove to Vivienne's place, arriving leisurely at the foot of her apartment building.

Vivienne had been waiting, revving her motorcycle's engine as Percival's car pulled up.

"Hey, unemployed, hop on! Let's catch the wind!" She called out, her voice cutting through the evening air.

The night breeze tousled their hair and stirred their spirits.

Percival stepped out of his car, methodically unbuttoning his tailored suit jacket and tossing it over the

hood like yesterday's news.

He approached Vivienne, scooped her up by the waist with one hand, and, with a little effort, placed her on the back seat.

With a spare helmet on, Percival's sleek look was surprisingly in harmony with his biker attire—a striking figure with an edge of refinement.

"Vivienne, hold on tight," he said, revving the engine and fixing his gaze on the road ahead.

She wrapped her arms around his sturdy frame, resting her head on his shoulder. "Mr. Wolf, let's ride!"

From that moment, they were truly side by side.

Percival rode aimlessly, the motorcycle's roar slicing through the night.

Gradually, the wind grew louder, and the taillights ahead fewer as they sped into the dark embrace of the open road.

The moon hung high, casting a luminous glow that battled the creeping tendrils of the evening breeze.

At last, Percival pulled the motorcycle to a halt on a deserted beach, where the stars seemed to stretch to infinity, each one a tiny beacon of awe-inspiring beauty.

Percival dismounted, one foot still grounded, and removed his helmet, hanging it casually on the handlebar.

Vivienne stepped out too, her hand finding Percival's, cool to the touch.

Together, they climbed atop a rock, gazing out into the vast, dark expanse of the ocean.

The sea roared, waves churning and crashing with a fierce intensity, a symphony of nature's unrest.

Back then, Percival thought those hidden reefs were enemies lurking in the depths.

Little did he know, the very sea they relied on for survival would be their undoing. Content belongs to

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Percival sighed deeply, pointing to a nearby rock. "It must've been that one. Leopold got stranded on it during high tide once, and we teased him for ages."

He went on to share stories about the Vanguard Agency, each word heavy with memory.

She knew he could not let go.

He could not let go of the battlefield where he had toiled for over a decade, of comrades with whom he had faced life and death, of too many things to count.

As the night deepened, Percival's breaths slowed until he was leaning on Vivienne's shoulder, softly

snoring.

Vivienne reached into her pocket and pulled out a pair of adhesive patches, placing one on her forehead and one on Percival's.

The relentless sea breeze would surely invite colds come morning if she didn't.

That night, they had only each other for company.

And from that point on, they would always have just each other.

Chapter 587

Dawn was barely breaking as Percival opened his eyes and reached for his phone to call Thomas.

Within minutes, Thomas arrived in his car and picked up the duo who had spent the night by the seaside.

"Where to, Percival?" Thomas did not ask why. He just did what he always did, taking care of what needed to be done.

Percival twirled a strand of Vivienne's hair. "To the office."

Vivienne yawned. "I'm heading back to crash."

After dropping Vivienne off, Thomas drove to the company.

In the president's office, someone was already waiting in silence.

Percival opened the door and greeted, "Boss."

The man in the chair turned around, a custom-made cane in hand. "Long time, no see."

Percival's lips curved into a half-smile as he ushered Micah to the couch and poured him a cup of coffee. "How have you been?"

Micah did not ask much but casually chatted with Percival. "Pretty good, just eating and sleeping. I've been so lazy that I hardly want to get up and exercise. My legs are paying the price."

Percival chuckled, responding briefly before asking, "Who's Rover?"

Micah's hand paused, a shadow flickering in his eyes, "Why do you ask?"

"Just curious," Percival replied nonchalantly.

Micah hesitated for a moment before setting down his coffee cup, "Percival, I know you don't trust anyone in the agency right now, but I can assure you, Rover is solid. He's someone I deeply respect, as did your mentor Lark and Vance, too."

Percival frowned subtly.

Such high praise from Micah meant Vance had not lied.

Rover was a deep well.

"Who is he?" Percival pressed.

Micah rubbed his injured leg. "Two people saved my life; one was your mentor, Lark, and the other was

Rover. They dragged me off the battlefield and saved my life and my leg. But Rover is a top-secret

agency asset. Beyond the code name, that's all I can tell you."

This was a realm within the Vanguard Agency that even Percival could not access.

Percival did not push further. He would eventually find out who Rover really was.

He smiled, his demeanor changing in an instant. "When will you be returning to service? I left a gift for

you in the deputy's office."

Micah snorted with laughter. "What could you possibly have for me, you rascal?"

"I'm the chairman of the Ellington Group." Percival smiled, continuing their casual conversation.

The last time they had chatted so freely was when Percival had first enlisted.

After a while, their conversation came to an end. Micah stood up, leaning on his cane. "Alright, I'm

heading back to work today. Retirement will have to wait a few more years!"

"Congratulations," Percival said as he saw Micah out.

Micah shook his head, not letting Percival walk him out any further than the office door. He took a long, deep look at Percival.

"Percival, from now on, you'll be fighting alone. The road ahead is perilous. Take care."

Percival nodded firmly, remembering Micah's words when he had joined the team—From now on, we fight together. No matter how perilous the road ahead is, I'm with you!

The days of fighting side by side were gone.

Micah patted Percival's shoulder. "When you have time, go see Yorick Linklater. He was the one who pushed for your promotion. Now that you're parting ways with the agency, you should visit him."

"Understood."

Percival respected Micah's decision and did not follow him out. He stood in the office, watching Micah take the elevator down until the doors closed.

Once alone, Percival sat back in his chair, took out his phone, and called Vivienne.

"Hey, Mr. Wolf..." Vivienne's sleepy voice came through the phone.

"Still not up?"

"Mmm, a bit groggy, but if you're offering to treat me to a beef stew, I'll wake right up."

Percival laughed heartily, "Beef stew, lamb stew, anything you say. But before that, I think you'll be more interested in this."

Vivienne paused, and then the sound of rustling came from the other end, "What's up?"

"The Linklater family!" Percival's eyes sparkled.

Vivienne sat up with a jolt.

The Linklater family!

Vesper!

She knew all too well that the name Vesper Linklater was just a stage name her mother had concocted on a whim.

Names like Evelyn or Hannah were all picked at random to make her way through the world more conveniently.

But Karen would never choose a surname associated with high status or power in Rivenwood. Such associations could lead to suspicion and trouble, which Karen always carefully avoided.

Yet this time, she had casually uttered Vesper Linklater.

Everyone knew the significance of that surname in Rivenwood.

The Linklater family was not a commercial dynasty like the Ellingtons nor an ancient warrior lineage like the Perezes.

Yet, whenever a Linklater stepped into the light, they captured the attention of all.

What the Linklaters were up to remained a mystery to the outside world, but the respect they commanded was unmatched.

Karen, of all people, had to be aware of the Linklater's unique standing.

Her casual mention of them was telling; the Linklaters must hold a special place for her.

"Do you know someone from the Linklater family?" Vivienne asked while slipping into a fresh set of clothes.

Percival nodded. "Yorick Linklater. He is a man I deeply admire; he was the Director of the Vanguard Agency two generations ago."

Could Karen's mention of that surname be linked to this man? Updated at Dramanovels.com

But with the Linklater's influence so vast, would Karen not be bothered?

"Let's go!" Vivienne zipped up her jacket. For some unknown reason, she was extremely curious about the Linklaters.

"Alright, I'll pick you up," Percival confirmed.

Percival shot Vivienne a glance, amusement mixed with annoyance. "Thomas is tied up."

As the current head of the squad and covertly serving as an assistant to the chairman of the Ellington Group, Thomas had his hands full.

The tense climate within the Vanguard Agency left him no time for chauffeuring.

Before long, Percival turned into the drive of a secluded manor, the entrance guarded by two uniformed individuals.

"Good evening. Identification, please," one of the guards addressed Percival with professional coolness.

Chapter 588

Percival presented his ID to the guard, who scanned it and did a visible double-take. A newfound respect tinged with puzzlement washed over his face as he looked up at Percival again.

"Deputy Director, please come inside." The guard swung the wrought-iron gate open, watching as

Percival strode through.

Vivienne glanced back, slightly taken aback that even the gatekeeper seemed deeply enmeshed with the Vanguard Agency.

And more so, he recognized Percival's rank.

Once inside the estate, it was a further ten-minute drive before Percival parked the car.

Stepping out alongside Percival, Vivienne was met with two individuals approaching, each holding a sleek, black satchel that housed the latest model of detection devices - the one Griffin had invented.

These devices had not even hit the market yet, and here, the Linklater security team each had one in hand.

"Apologies, but we'll need to collect all electronic devices, including cell phones and cameras."

Percival nonchalantly tossed his phone, wallet, and even his wristwatch into one of the satchels.

Spreading his arms, he allowed the security personnel to sweep their detectors over him.

Vivienne followed suit, her watch joining Percival's belongings in the bag.

After the check, Percival took Vivienne's hand, and, led by one of the guards, they finally entered the main hall of the Linklater estate.

Navigating through the corridors, Vivienne glimpsed a grand staircase leading up to the Linklaters'

living quarters.

She sighed silently.

The security measures were nearly as stringent as airport checks, minus the conveyor belt and x-ray

machine.

Percival squeezed her hand and whispered, audible only to the two of them, "Yorick's got his rules, but

he's nice. No need to worry. Not the boogeyman type."

Vivienne chuckled, "Good to hear he's not the boogeyman, or we'd be surrounded by them."

With a shared smile, they continued into the Linklater residence.

The person who came out to greet them was a surprise.

"Vivienne, it's you two."

It was Diana.

Vivienne eyed Diana with surprise, not expecting to find her here.

Diana said to the man behind her, "Dracon, let me introduce you. This is my father's goddaughter,

Vivienne Hawthorn, and her fiancé, Percival Ellington. Vivienne, Dracon Linklater and I were college buddies. We're here visiting Yorick today. Your grandfather even specially mentioned I spend some extra time with Yorick."

Diana's words were loaded with implications.

College buddies, especially mentioned.

Could it be that Jasper intended for Diana to forge a bond with the Linklater family?

It was also apparent that Jasper and Yorick were old acquaintances.

Dracon stepped forward, shaking Percival's hand. "You must be Percival Ellington. My father speaks of you often."

Vivienne's gaze dropped, sensing, perhaps mistakenly, that Dracon was deliberately overlooking her.

After Diana's introduction, courtesy dictated that Dracon should at least acknowledge her presence, yet he bypassed her to greet Percival directly.

Vivienne could not help but inwardly sigh at the prospect of yet another enemy.

"Vivienne and I are here to see Yorick today, and I apologize for any inconvenience. Is he available?"

Percival's tone was polite but firm, emphasizing Vivienne's importance.

It was clear that Percival genuinely respected Yorick and, by extension, treated his family with great care.

"He is, but it's not a good time. My father's not feeling well," Dracon said apologetically.

Percival's brows furrowed with concern. "What's wrong with Yorick?"

"Just the old issues flaring up. He's not been well since a cold he caught a few days back," Dracon replied, leading Percival towards the parlor, never once glancing at Vivienne.

Diana followed Dracon closely, and though they did not speak, their movements were in sync, suggesting a subtle intimacy.

"What did the doctors say about Yorick's illness?" Percival asked.

Dracon shook his head. "They didn't say much, but the implication is that my father might be bedridden from here on out. The injuries from his youth are catching up to him."

The concern on Percival's face was as palpable as when Richard fell ill.

Vivienne had not wanted to get involved, but seeing Percival's distress, she was willing to offer her help to Mr. Wolf.

"Mr. Linklater, I have some medical knowledge. If it's okay with you, I'd like to have a look at Yorick.

Maybe I can help," Vivienne said, her tone warm yet respectful.

To her surprise, Dracon's gaze hardened as he surveyed her, "You? Specter Healer? Such a young lady making such bold claims."

Vivienne had spoken up for Percival's sake, but Dracon's response left her cold.

If Yorick were not so esteemed by Percival and Karen, she would not have offered help even if he were dying before her.

She lifted her gaze to Dracon, her eyes narrowing, a chill emanating from her.

But then, she hesitated. Dracon had called her the Specter Healer.

She had never formally introduced herself to the Linklaters, but somehow, Dracon had already pegged her identity.

She shot a glance at Diana, realizing that her title must've come up in conversation more than a few times around Dracon.

His courtesy towards Dracon had been nothing but a courtesy extended through Yorick. Now that

Dracon showed Vivienne no respect, why would he bother with pleasantries?

Vivienne could not help but chuckle; Diana was acting as if she were the lady of the Linklater family.

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Between the lines of her peace-making, Vivienne could tell the implication was clear: they were guests who had overstepped, trying to meddle in affairs that were not theirs to handle.

"We're not upset. But right now, I'm more concerned about your vision than Yorick," Vivienne said, her gaze drifting towards the security monitors that lined the front of the Linklater Mansion.

The screens showed every angle from the mansion's outer gates to the front door. Such an oversight, and yet when Diana had seen Vivienne, her surprise was almost convincing.

Quite the actress, Vivienne mused.

Diana, catching the sarcasm, could only offer a strained chuckle. "Don't worry, I've got you, right?"

Vivienne laughed softly. "I don't have the time."

As the words left her lips, an alarm suddenly blared from a south-facing room on the second floor of the Linklater Mansion.

Chapter 589

The moment Dracon heard the news, he couldn't care less about the chaos around him and bolted

upstairs.

"What are you all waiting for? Why haven't you started my dad's surgery?"

The doctor looked at Dracon helplessly, "Mr. Linklater, your father's condition is beyond our control. His

blood pressure's through the roof, and we can't just operate willy-nilly. One wrong move, and he

might..."

Listening to the doctors detail the complications, Vivienne knew that the slightest slip during the

operation could mean Yorick would never wake up.

Dracon was both furious and frantic. "Then what do you suggest we do? Just let my dad sit around

waiting? Find someone who can operate right away. Money's no object. Just cure my dad!"

The doctors were at a loss, but after some thought, one spoke up, "Mr. Linklater, you mentioned a

'Specter Healer'? Is he here? If he is, there's definitely hope for your father!"

The others chimed in agreement, "Yes, yes, Specter Healer could save him, Mr. Linklater. Is he here?"

Dracon was momentarily stunned; he glanced downstairs, where Vivienne was chatting with Percival,

oblivious to the urgency.

Following Dracon's gaze, the doctor mistook Percival for Specter Healer and hurried down to him,

"You're the Specter Healer, right? Please, you must save Mr. Yorick Linklater. We're running out of time."

Percival, with his arm around Vivienne, said, "I'm Specter Healer's husband. This is my fiancée. We understand the gravity of the situation, but we must be leaving now."

The doctor was taken aback and then looked at Vivienne with a mix of surprise and admiration.

Who would have thought that the Specter Healer was such a young lady?

"Specter Healer, I know it's a lot to ask, but Mr. Yorick's life is on the line. Please, we need you to stay and lead this operation."

Percival's fingers tensed, worry flickering in his eyes.

Vivienne tapped his waist reassuringly as if to say, "Don't worry, I'm here."

Only then did the urgency on Percival's face fade.

Vivienne smiled at the doctor. "May I ask which son of the Linklater family you are?"

Caught off guard, the doctor quickly explained, "I'm not one of Yorick's sons. I'm his personal physician..."

He paused, then understanding Vivienne's implication, turned to Dracon, "Mr. Linklater, she is the Specter Healer, renowned for bringing the dead back to life, a miracle worker. Please, make your decision quickly."

Clenching his fists, Dracon had no choice but to plead with Vivienne, "Vivienne, please operate on my dad. Money is no issue."

Vivienne yawned. "I'm busy."

Dracon's eyes narrowed. "As a doctor, are you really going to watch a patient die right under your nose?"

Vivienne's lips curved into a playful smile. "Whether I watch a patient die is my call, depending on whether they're my patient. The decision to treat or not is mine."

Dracon had never been treated like this, and his disdain for Vivienne grew.

"Mr. Linklater, that's not an appropriate attitude to have when pleading. Mr. Yorick's life is at stake!

Please! Just put down your pride for your father's sake!" The doctor did not know the tension between Vivienne and Dracon, but he could tell Vivienne was upset.

Time equaled life, and Yorick could not afford to wait for Vivienne to cool off.

Left with no choice, Dracon could not let his pride cost his father precious treatment time.

He descended the stairs, his demeanor softening as he said, "Specter Healer, please save my father.

Name your price, and I'll triple it."

Vivienne eyed Percival and gauged the situation.

Mr. Wolf's reputation was priceless.

But this could work.

"I don't need money, but I do require a certain... respect," Vivienne said, her eyes half-lidded as she watched Dracon.

Gritting his teeth, Dracon bowed deeply to her.

"Ms. Vivienne, please save my father."

Finally, Vivienne relented. "Prepare the OR!"

The doctors, their hearts in their throats, had the operating room ready in minutes.

Three hours later, the OR doors swung open.

Removing her mask, Vivienne stepped out to Dracon and Diana's anxious faces.

"How's my dad?" Dracon asked.

"An hour," Vivienne breathed out.

"An hour and what? Vivienne, if anything happens to my dad, I swear you'll pay!" Dracon yelled at her.

Vivienne frowned slightly, raising her hand to silence Dracon's voice. "In an hour, Yorick will wake up."

Dracon choked, glaring at Vivienne but unable to speak.

"As for you," Vivienne's eyes flashed coldly. "Shut up for an hour."

Diana was stunned by Vivienne's capabilities.

She had not expected her to be so formidable. Despite the stringent security of the Linklater family

estate, Vivienne effortlessly silenced Dracon's voice.

Vivienne was indeed a force to be reckoned with!

Percival pulled Vivienne to the couch to wait out the hour.

Voiceless, Dracon paced silently for over an hour.

Of course, Vivienne didn't hold back. She had been craving a hearty beef stew after the lengthy

surgery, and now she was famished.

The fruit bowl was empty in no time.

Dracon could only watch, utterly speechless – literally. Content belongs to Dramanovels.com

Dracon had no energy left to pick a bone with Vivienne. Just as he was about to head over, he saw that Vivienne and Percival had already gotten there before him.

He glanced back in surprise, making sure his eyes were not playing tricks on him.

Dracon was no stranger to a bit of self-defense training, but next to Percival and Vivienne, his skills seemed like child's play.

Otherwise, how could he have missed them passing right by?

Inside the room, Yorick was fully conscious, his head and body still wrapped in bandages, but he looked visibly better.

"Dad, you're finally awake. Are you feeling uncomfortable anywhere?" Dracon asked with concern as he and Diana entered.

Yorick shook his head. "I'm fine now. You go on. I need to have a word with Percival."

Chapter 590

Dracon hesitated, the words on the tip of his tongue dying before they could be born. He had no choice but to heed Yorick's command.

Diana didn't even offer a word of concern before Dracon led her out.

Yorick glanced at Percival, then at Vivienne by his side, his gaze softening with a touch of tenderness.

"My dear, how old are you now?"

"Twenty," Vivienne replied.

Her twentieth birthday had passed, but she had never been one to celebrate. Birthdays always

reminded her of her mother.

Thus, when Mr. Wolf suggested throwing her a birthday bash, she declined.

But she decided future birthdays could be celebrated.

The thought of all the years gone by without her mother's homemade strawberry cheesecake made her

blood boil! All because Karen faked her death! From now on, she swore to indulge in strawberry

cheesecake on her birthdays until she couldn't take another bite!

Despite her disdain for Dracon, she held a fondness for Yorick.

She felt an indescribable familiarity in Yorick, just like the first time she met Jasper.

Yorick clicked his tongue. "Putting up with this sourpuss for a boyfriend must be tough on you."

Vivienne chuckled. "It's not so bad; Mr. Wolf treats me well."

"A face like a block of ice, and you say he treats you well? Child, if that boy ever gives you trouble, you come straight to me. I'll make sure he regrets it," Yorick said with a deepening smile, his eyes shining with affection for Vivienne.

Percival could only sigh to himself.

No matter the company, when Vivienne was around, he might as well have been invisible.

Well, he mused, who could blame him for being willingly outshone by her?

"Thank you, Mr. Yorick. But Mr. Wolf wouldn't dare. He knows he can't outmatch me," Vivienne said, not

realizing she was becoming more talkative in Yorick's company.

After a bit more chatter, Yorick finally turned his attention back to Percival.

He let out a deep sigh, "I thought the next time I saw you, you'd be the Director of Vanguard Agency."

The title of Director reflected Yorick's high hopes for Percival.

Clearly, he saw him as his successor.

Percival bowed his head slightly. "I'm sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Yorick."

Yorick waved it off, "Disappointment is beside the point. You young folks have your own paths, and I

understand that. The recent incident must have hurt you deeply."

Percival offered a faint smile in response.

The room fell silent for a moment before Yorick continued, "I've been out of the loop at Vanguard

Agency for a while now. I don't know many of the new faces, so I can't offer much help. But your road

ahead should be easier. If you ever need me, for Vivienne's sake, I'll be there."

Percival could not help but laugh. "Seems Vivienne holds more sway than me."

"Of course, she and I hit it off from the start, unlike you," Yorick replied, giving Vivienne another

meaningful glance. "My dear, what did your parents do?"

Vivienne smiled. "You might have met my mother; she was a member of the special squad known as

Lark. As for my father, I never met him."

Yorick straightened up, surprised, "You're Lark's daughter? She had a child!"

"Yes, that's me." Vivienne knew then that the Linklater that Karen had mentioned must be none other

than Yorick before her.

Yorick scrutinized Vivienne closely, then nodded in affirmation. "Yes, you resemble her. I always

thought you looked familiar. I once hoped to have her join our family. To think she had a child and such a fine one at that. I envy her father-in-law."

Vivienne could tell Yorick's envy was genuine.

But Vivienne did not even know who her father was, let alone her grandfather, so she felt there was really no need for envy.

After some more small talk, Vivienne broached the subject she had on her mind. "Mr. Yorick, I'm trying to find someone. Have you ever heard of a person named Vesper Linklater?"

Yorick shook his head. "There's no Vesper in the Linklater family."

"Thank you, Mr. Yorick. I got it." Vivienne acknowledged.

After spending a little more time with Yorick, Vivienne and Percival took their leave.

As they were parting, Vivienne checked Yorick's pulse and noticed a mole on his wrist.

She smiled to herself, not because the mole was extraordinary, but because she had a similar one in the exact same spot.

Once Vivienne and Percival had left, Dracon returned with Diana to visit.

Dracon was clearly unhappy, while Diana seemed more enthusiastic, greeting Yorick warmly.

"You've done well coming here. Tell your father not to worry; this old body of mine has a few good years

left to play chess with him," Yorick said with a smile.

His words were a polite dismissal.

Catching the hint, Diana quickly bid her farewells and left.

Once she was gone, Yorick's smile faded.

"Dad, Diana's been waiting for so long. Why did you send her away like that?"

"Son, you should keep your distance from Diana. That girl... she's a wild card," Yorick remarked, his eyes narrowing.

Dracon bristled at his father's advice but knew better than to argue.

"Dad, Diana is..."

"I'm tired." Yorick closed his eyes, signaling the end of the discussion with Dracon.

With nothing left to say, Dracon clammed up and sheepishly made his way out.

Having left the Linklater residence, Diana did not head back to the Perez home. Instead, she took a

path that led her in the opposite direction, up a winding mountain road. Updated at Dramanovels.com

Arriving at a quaint bungalow, Diana stepped out of the car and pushed open the door to enter.

"Are you a rabbit or something? With all these hideouts," Diana complained with a hint of annoyance.

F-Poison shook her head, "I'm more of a dragon, actually."

Diana rolled her eyes, taking a moment to catch her breath before sitting down. "What about Vesper?

What have you found out?"

F-Poison set aside the book she was reading and removed her silver-rimmed glasses, "Nothing."

"What?" Diana exclaimed in shock. "Not a single clue?"

"That's right." F-Poison leaned back on the couch. Her curiosity was piqued as she looked at Diana.

"Why are you digging into this Vesper character, anyway?"