

## Million-Dollar 591

### Chapter 591

F-Poison narrowed her eyes, her voice dropping to a serious growl. "What do you mean? Did this guy named Vesper save Vivienne, or because of him, you couldn't drop the poison?"

F-Poison's rare display of emotion took Diana aback. "Yeah, it was Vesper who saved Vivienne."

She relayed the details of Vivienne's rescue by Vesper, which she had meant to share before, but F-Poison had seemed disinterested.

However, upon hearing the story, F-Poison's gaze turned gravely serious. "Are you sure that this Vesper guy stepped in after Vivienne drank the juice?"

"Yeah, what's the big deal?" Diana asked, perplexed.

F-Poison usually had little change in expression, whether it was committing arson or enjoying a fondue as if nothing mattered to her. But this time, Diana could see the weight in her thoughts.

After a moment, F-Poison let out a sardonic laugh, her eyes lifting to meet Diana's. "Go see Flynn again."

Diana's surprise was clear. "But we agreed on only one visit. How can I keep coming up with excuses to see him?"

"No matter the excuse, you must see him, Diana. If you want to stay in the Perez family, it's essential,"

F-Poison said, standing up, a dangerous aura enveloping her.

Swallowing hard, Diana pressed, "Can't you tell me why?"

A sly smile played on F-Poison's lips. "Sasha might be coming back."

Diana shot up. "What are you talking about? That's impossible! Didn't you say she was dead?"

The solemnity had vanished from F-Poison's face, replaced with mockery. "Dead doesn't mean she can't come back. Sasha's a clever one. You should be glad she remembers nothing."

"What do I do? One Vivienne is trouble enough, now with Sasha possibly returning? No, she cannot come back!"

Pacing in front of F-Poison, Diana was in a panic. "Right, I must see Flynn. He's F-Poison's apprentice, so he must know the details of Sasha's disappearance and how to deal with her."

With that, Diana grabbed her purse and hurried out.

F-Poison watched her go, a quiet chuckle escaping her.

After returning home, Diana concocted numerous excuses, knowing that asking to see Flynn would

raise suspicions within the Perez family, especially from Maddox, whose hostility had grown since Willa's departure.

It seemed she had no choice but to turn to Dracon of the Linklater family. Even though they were uninvolved with CK, they had connections to GTO, and Yorick had once fought alongside Jasper in RST.

If Dracon could ask about Flynn in Yorick's name, it would not seem suspicious.

With that thought, Diana dialed Dracon's number.

"Diana, what brings you to call so late?" Dracon's voice held a hint of surprise.

"Dracon, you're still awake? Waiting for my call, perhaps?" Diana's voice was soft and teasing.

Dracon already harbored feelings for Diana, and her words only added to his affection.

"Yes, I've been waiting for your call for twenty years," he admitted.

Diana chuckled shyly. "There's a favor I need to ask of you. Can you help?"

"Your matters are mine," Dracon replied without hesitation.

Relieved, Diana explained her request.

Dracon disagreed immediately. "Why do you need to see Flynn? And why go through me?"

"I feel responsible for Sasha's disappearance. If I had not fallen asleep, things might've been different.

He says he knows where Sasha is, so I want to ask him."

After a pause, Diana added, "You know my older brothers don't trust me much, so I'd rather not disturb them."

Dracon's heart went out to her. "You shouldn't blame yourself. You were only a child. Don't worry, I'll help you."

"Thank you, Dracon," Diana said, her voice catching with emotion.

True to his word, Dracon visited the Perez family the next day with gifts, seeking Jasper's permission to meet Flynn.

His reasons were solid, and Jasper consented to the visit.

"Dad, Dracon doesn't bother with Linklater family affairs. Why the sudden interest?" Yuri asked, puzzled.

Dracon was the second son, with one older brother and two younger siblings who were pillars of their nation, especially the eldest, whom Yuri greatly admired. Dracon was the only one who seemed to

achieve little in the Linklater family.

Jasper shook his head. "Who knows? But keep an eye on Diana. Don't let her get too close to Dracon.

She didn't want to marry him back then, but now they're still somehow entangled. Plus, I don't like

Dracon much, so Yorick and I both don't agree to this marriage, yet the two of them are getting closer."

Maddox chuckled. "Dad, that's where you're mistaken. It's a classic case of playing hard to get. Who

knows what your darling daughter is really thinking?"

Yuri shook his head in resigned amusement as he watched his father and brother go at it. He had other

things on his mind.

The invitations had been sent out, and it was time to pick out the perfect gifts.

Of course, Vivienne and Percival were also on the hunt for presents.

"How about this pair of bracelets?" Vivienne showed her tablet to Percival, displaying a design she had

crafted especially for Natalia and Yasmine.

Percival nodded. "They look good." Content of Dramanovels.com

But Vivienne was not satisfied, "No, they can't hold a candle to those adorable little ballet flats we saw.

We need to brainstorm some more."

Percival chuckled at her competitive spirit.

Then, his attention returned to his smartphone, and he scrolled through the latest research he had been compiling.

Suddenly, his eyes narrowed.

Dracon wanted a meeting with Flynn?

Yorick had stepped back from the Vanguard Agency's affairs for a while now. What could Dracon possibly want with Flynn?

Percival tapped the screen a few times, and a video popped up immediately.

Chapter 592

The security camera footage was playing back the clandestine visit of Dracon and Diana to the high-security prison to see Flynn.

"Flynn, cut the crap and spill it – where's the F-Poison? And Sasha, what the hell happened back

then?" Dracon's face was a mask of fury as he glared at Flynn. To an outsider, it might look like his own sister had been kidnapped.

Flynn regarded Diana and Dracon with a detached coolness. His icy gaze was tinged with a hint of

mockery.

"Are you a Linklater?" Flynn asked, his voice frosty.

Dracon snorted. "Glad you know. You better cooperate, or you're in for a world of hurt!"

Flynn suddenly burst into laughter. "Oh, you must be Dracon Linklater, the family's black sheep. I

always wondered what sort of failure Yorick could produce. Seeing you today, it's clear the rumors are

true. Are you even his biological son?"

"What's that supposed to mean!" Dracon bristled. The last thing he wanted was to be compared to the

other high-achieving Linklater kids.

Everyone knew the Linklaters did not tolerate dead weight, yet somehow, they ended up with Dracon.

From childhood, he lacked the talents of his brothers, and eventually, even his younger sister

surpassed him. Left with no other choice, Yorick kept him close by.

Now, while the rest of the Linklaters shone in their respective fields, Dracon was still the quintessential

adult child living at home, serving at his father's beck and call.

Flynn, lounging in his chair, idly picked at his ear. "You two are quite the pair – a washout and an

adopted daughter, both outcasts."

A flash of anger crossed Diana's eyes. Flynn was trapped in his own little hell, tormented by sickness

daily, yet he dared to mock her.

"Stop trying to stir the pot. I want to know if you're the one who tried to poison Vivienne and frame me

for it. She drank juice I made by hand, and then she was poisoned. Luckily, someone noticed and

saved her in time. Was it your doing?"

Flynn's facade cracked momentarily at Diana's words, but he quickly regained his composure.

With a sardonic smile, he replied, "I'm locked up in here, waiting on your schedules to grace me with a

visit. Why would I frame you? Or was it your own botched attempt at murder, little Miss Incompetent?"

"Flynn!" Diana was inches from charging in to throw punches.

Fortunately, common sense prevailed, and she held back. She knew all too well that with her modest

skills, even if Flynn were bound hand and foot, she could not touch him.

Dracon stepped in to shield her. "Where's F-Poison? Dead or alive? What did you do to Sasha?"

Flynn yawned, clearly bored. "Is anyone there? Show these guests out!"

"You sure you won't say a word?" Diana's eyes narrowed as she stared at Flynn.



She was aware that every visit to Flynn was a channel for him to communicate with F-Poison, though it was all in code she never understood.

But this time, Flynn remained silent.

Flynn's gaze hardened. "I said, show them out!"

Fuming, Diana stormed out, and Dracon promptly followed, not bothering to stay any longer.

Percival shut off the video, his deep-set eyes reflecting a glint of confusion.

Was Diana trying to clear her name?

Vivienne finished adjusting the design of a bracelet and set down her pen. "Mr. Wolf, I think it's best just to watch and wait."

Percival snapped out of his thoughts, caressing Vivienne's cheek gently. "Yeah, you're right."

Vivienne said no more but pointed to the finished bracelet design and asked Percival, "Does this look good?"

He nodded. "Yeah, it's way better than those shoes."

Vivienne laughed, sending the design off to Draven with orders to have it completed before Natalia's and Yasmine's birthdays.

On the day of the celebration, Vivienne's gift boxes contained two exquisite jade bracelets crafted from the finest nephrite jade.

The Perez family did not have many kins in Rivenwood, and they kept their business gatherings intimate, so the guest list was not extensive.

However, those who did attend were all movers and shakers.

Richard made an early appearance, having received a generous gift from the Perez family at a previous banquet and eager to renew his chess rivalry with Jasper.

Cecilia and Zelda sat together, earnestly discussing how to bake a cake despite their limited culinary expertise.

Nathan, Yuri, and Maddox engaged in a lively discussion about stocks and business, never short on conversation.

When Vivienne and Percival arrived, they coincidentally ran into Diana and Dracon getting out of their car.

Diana greeted Vivienne with warmth, linking arms. "Vivienne, what a coincidence! Let's head in

together."

Vivienne merely glanced at her coolly before turning to go inside, with Dracon and Percival trailing behind in silence.

"Father, look, I brought Vivienne with me." Diana feigned closeness with Vivienne, hoping to prove her innocence regarding the recent poisoning incident.

Vivienne saw through her petty ploy, merely curling her lips in response without saying much.

"Grandpa," Vivienne greeted, smoothly extracting her hand from Diana's grip. "Grandpa, is Finnian here yet?"

Jasper let out a snort. "That old geezer still has the nerve to show up? He dropped off the gifts early this morning, sneaking them at the bedside of Natalia and Yasmine without showing his face."

Vivienne could not help but laugh, "He's afraid to face you."

"He could never beat me in the past, and look at you now, kid, still pulling fast ones!" Jasper tapped Richard on the back of his hand.

Richard, a decade Jasper's junior, might be old too, but in Jasper's presence, he was still the kid!

"Acting spry is still better than your cheap tricks!"

"Acting spry is shameful!"

The two old-timers were at it again, in their third round of bickering for the day.

Just like a couple of children.

Vivienne decided to let them be, knowing they would settle down soon enough. She grabbed the gifts

and went off to find Natalia and Yasmine.

Diana stood off to the side like part of the furniture, ignored by everyone. Updated at [Drămanovels.com](http://Drămanovels.com)

Watching Vivienne chat with Natalia and Yasmine as if she were coming home, Diana's heart was

boiling with resentment.

Even when Willa, who was usually as cold as ice, showed up, Natalia and Yasmine were over the

moon, following her around and calling her "Auntie Willa."

But with Diana, they remained distant.

Seeing Vivienne's closeness with the kids now only fueled Diana's jealousy further.

"Diana, what are you staring at?" Dracon came over, casually draping an arm around Diana's

shoulders.

Diana did not pull away; instead, she let out a whimper of self-pity, "It's nothing, Dracon. Let's go over there."

## Chapter 593

Diana's pout could have tugged the heartstrings of the stone statues in the garden. "I'm fine," she insisted, but even her echo did not believe her.

Dracon followed Diana's gaze and naturally landed on Vivienne.

"She's been stealing your thunder again, hasn't she? Don't worry, I'll get your back. No one messes with you on my watch," Dracon said with a steely edge to his voice.

Before long, all the guests had arrived.

Yuri exchanged pleasantries with Natalia and Yasmine before moving on to the gift-giving part of the evening.

Isolde Ellington, on behalf of the Ellington family, presented two antique locket. To the trained eye, these were not ordinary trinkets. They were antiques, auctioned for a hefty sum over a decade ago, once belonging to twin princesses from an age long past.

The crowd murmured their appreciation; the Ellingtons never did anything by halves.

Vivienne waited her turn, and once most had presented their gifts, she stepped forward. "Happy

birthday, Natalia, Yasmine."

Upon opening the gift box, the sight of two exquisite jade bracelets lit up the girls' eyes.

Indeed, no matter the age, jewelry had a certain irresistible allure for women.

"Thank you, Vivienne," the girls chimed in unison, their eyes sparkling with joy.

Vivienne ruffled their hair affectionately. Paired with the shoes Karen had given earlier, these bracelets would keep Natalia and Yasmine in good health for years to come.

The crowd was duly impressed. Such bracelets were not items one simply stumbled upon in a store.

Then, a snicker cut through the chatter. "I was curious what Ms. Hawthorn would bring. Just a pair of

bracelets? How uninspired. I heard Jasper once gave you the Heart of Hope set, and as Master

Jessica, plucking a bracelet from your inventory is no hassle. I thought you only played games with

women, but it seems you don't spare the children either."

All eyes turned to Dracon, the only one who could deliver such a biting remark.

The faces of the Perez family fell, and the Ellingtons were not pleased either.

Public ridicule of their daughter-in-law was something the Ellingtons could not abide!

Vivienne, holding onto Percival, stepped forward. "I wonder what you have brought that might enlighten me, the master of deception?"

Dracon scoffed and presented his gift: an ancient wooden box. When opened, a prism of colors nearly blinded the onlookers.

Inside lay a rare multicolored opal – Rainbow Opal! It was a gemstone scarcely seen in a hundred years, invaluable both as jewelry and as a collectible.

And this was no mere purchase; wealth alone could not secure such a rarity.

The last sighting had been five years ago when a mysterious collector briefly brought it into the light before it vanished from public view.

That collector was none other than Dracon.

The Linklater family was indeed in a league of its own, gifting such a treasure without a second thought, and two stones at once, too!

Cecilia, a collector herself, was dazzled by the opal, but her disdain for Dracon kept her from expressing her awe. "Show off," she muttered under her breath, "My son will have his own someday."

Percival smiled, wrapping an arm around Vivienne. "Mr. Linklater, is this the Rainbow Opal?"

"Indeed. It's precious, but giving it to Natalia and Yasmine is worth it," Dracon replied, bowing

gentlemanly and delivering the Rainbow Opal to Natalia and Yasmine. "Do the young princesses like my gift?"

Natalia and Yasmine, though charmed by the opal, could not warm up to it, not after Dracon's earlier disparagement of Vivienne.

Sensing the tension, Diana knelt to smooth things over. "This is a special gift chosen just for you two by Uncle Dracon. Say thank you."

Dracon played in Diana's favor. "Diana mentioned you liked sparkly things, so here we are."

"Mr. Linklater, may I take a closer look at your Rainbow Opal?" Percival asked.

With a look of disdain, Dracon watched Percival hug Vivienne like a precious gem. He had thought Percival was a hero worthy of respect, but apparently, he was just another man orbiting around a woman.

Dracon handed the box over. "Please, Mr. Ellington."

Percival took the opal and, to Dracon's horror, began tossing it as one might juggle balls.



"What are you doing, Percival?" Dracon nearly shouted.

Vivienne's smile was subtle as she said, "The Rainbow Opal can't be shattered; it can only be cut with special tools. What's to fear?"

Dracon frowned. "I'm not afraid, but isn't Mr. Ellington's casual treatment of another's gift a bit impolite?"

Suddenly, Percival hurled the opal to the ground without a word. To the shock of everyone, the supposedly unbreakable opal shattered upon the pebbled path, leaving nothing but fragments.

The guests were stunned into silence.

Was it not supposed to be unbreakable?

Laughter broke the tension, starting with Maddox and soon spreading like wildfire.

Dracon's face cycled through shades of red and white, his composure as shattered like the opal that had sparkled mere moments before.

Even Diana struggled to maintain her poise in the face of this debacle.

Such was the drama at a Linklater family soiree.

Gifting someone a present, especially to two little kids, and then it turns out to be a fake?

That was like pulling wool over children's eyes!

Vivienne shrugged nonchalantly. "Funny thing, I actually have."

With that, Vivienne extended her hand. "Natalia and Yasmine, would you darlings bring over the

bracelets I gave you?" New chapter available on [Dramanovels.com](http://Dramanovels.com)

The girls, obedient as ever, slid the bracelets off their wrists and handed them to Vivienne.

Whether by accident or design, Vivienne did not catch them, and the bracelets clattered onto the floor.

Those were supposed to be jade bracelets, which would shatter upon impact.

Regardless, it was the thought that counted, and Zelda was not one to waste. She moved to catch

them, but Vivienne did not flinch.

On closer inspection, the bracelets on the ground were not even scratched, let alone shattered!

Percival bent down to pick up the bracelets just as they caught the sunlight.

"These," Vivienne declared, holding them up to the light, "are the true Rainbow Opals."

Chapter 594

In the crowd, a gasp cut through the chatter, and the crowd's attention snapped into focus.

Vivienne had fashioned the rare Rainbow Opal into not one but two stunning bracelets!

Zelda gasped. "Vivienne, this... this is such extravagance!"

The Rainbow Opal was precious, and to craft bracelets from it required so much of the material it was enough to make one's blood run cold.

Even Zelda, who never cared for the cost of things, felt a pang of remorse.

But Vivienne seemed unfazed. Rainbow Opal? Her storage was brimming with them.

All gifts from Mr. Wolf!

"Auntie, if you fancy, I'll have a matching jewelry set made for you tomorrow. The Rainbow Opal has so many colors, I had them all worked into these jade-like pieces. Looks rather regal, don't you think?"

Vivienne said with a grin.

Percival's gaze remained fixed on Vivienne's waist. "Hmm, anything Vivienne gifts is her own design, unique in the market."

That was when it dawned on everyone.

These bracelets were not just made of Rainbow Opal; they were the latest creations by the master jeweler, Jessica.

Jessica's designs had gone viral online, and owning one was extremely lucky.

Since that event with the Ellingtons, she had not designed a thing.

But now, she had personally designed these bracelets!

Considering both the material and the designer, these bracelets were priceless treasures!

Natalia and Yasmine slid the bracelets back onto their wrists, cherishing them immensely.

The pair draped themselves over Vivienne, cooing rather slyly, "Vivienne, can I come to you for all my jewelry needs from now on?"

"Vivienne, make it two of each, okay? And in exchange, I'll treat you to a strawberry cheesecake!"

At the mention of strawberry cheesecake, Vivienne nodded emphatically, "Deal! But it's two cheesecakes each time!"

The word spread: To commission a piece from master Jessica, all it took was two strawberry cheesecakes!

Dracon could never have imagined Vivienne possessed so much Rainbow Opal, much less that he had been parading a counterfeit!

Where did that leave his family's honor? How could he, Dracon, hold his head high among these

people now?

Diana could not even lift her gaze. She had spoken up to assert her status, unwittingly defending

Dracon.

Now, everyone knew they had presented a fake!

Mortified, Dracon slipped away while the crowd was distracted, keen to avoid further mockery.

Sharp-eyed Isolde called out, "Dracon, leaving so soon?"

All eyes turned to him.

Dracon shot Isolde a venomous look—she was as irritating as her brother Percival.

Maddox scooped Isolde into his arms. "Isolde dear, let him go. The Perez family won't welcome his

kind anymore after he bullied your sister-in-law."

Maddox's stance was clear—the Perez family's disapproval stemmed not from the counterfeit opal but

from Dracon's public slight against Vivienne.

"Mr. Linklater, no need for farewells," Yuri chimed in, his gaze dark as he looked at Dracon.

Clenching his fists, Dracon had not anticipated such a humiliation; after all, their families were old

acquaintances.

Richard approached and said, "Before you leave, apologize to my granddaughter-in-law. Otherwise, I will have to inquire with your family head just how our family offended the Linklaters to deserve such disrespect!"

Jasper remained silent. His gaze on Dracon implied that an apology was non-negotiable if he wished to leave the Perez estate.

Cornered, Dracon, before the assembled crowd, offered a grudging apology to Vivienne, "My apologies, Ms. Hawthorn, for my ignorance. I will visit soon to express my regrets personally."

Vivienne's lips curved as she said word by word. "No, harm, done."

Yet as Dracon turned to leave, a subtle flick of Vivienne's finger left him stiff-limbed yet outwardly unchanged. He exited with an awkward, mechanical gait, inciting laughter from the audience.

Maddox could not resist a jab at Diana, "Aren't you going to escort your dear classmate out?"

He had not forgotten Diana's earlier smugness!

Diana, reluctantly, ushered Dracon out with hurried steps.

Jasper watched on. Diana was his charge; the pettiness she displayed earlier had not escaped his

notice. With the unresolved issue of a prior poisoning attempt still in the air, Jasper's anger simmered.

Diana nearly ran out in tears. As soon as Dracon stepped off the Perez property, his stiffness vanished.

Seeing Diana's tear-streaked face, Dracon felt a twinge of guilt. "I'm sorry, Diana. I didn't expect it to be a fake. I bought it in haste from those jewelers without proper verification."

If she could manage to marry into the Linklater family, there might just be a sliver of hope for a turnaround.

Diana paused, and Dracon realized he might have misspoken. "Diana, that's not what I meant. I mean, she's not worthy, not like you. You grew up by Jasper's side; she can't compare to you!"

"I know." Diana forced a smile, although inside, she was cursing Dracon up and down!

Dracon spent a lot of time sweet-talking Diana, and eventually, the tension between them eased.

However, they were oblivious to the stealthy footsteps inching closer behind them. Content of

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After a day filled with indulgence, Dracon and Diana managed to return to the Linklater estate before nightfall.

Yorick had already retired for the night, and Dracon slipped back to his room without a sound.

On a hilltop outside the Linklater estate, Karen was peering through a pair of binoculars so powerful

she could tell if the Linklater's dog had double eyelids or not.

All of Linklater's elaborate security systems failed to track her.

Karen was not really interested in the dog's eyelids, of course. Her gaze was fixed on the only family

portrait above the fireplace in the Linklater home.

Each face on the portrait bore a gentle smile.

But Karen's eyes were drawn to the face just behind Yorick's, staring for a long, long time.

It was him...

Chapter 595

After splitting up with Dracon, Diana once again sought out the enigmatic F-Poison. This time, the

rendezvous was in a downtown apartment, a far cry from the labyrinthine alleys of their last meeting.

"That's all Flynn said, nothing else," Diana grumbled reluctantly. "When are you going to deal with

Vivienne? If she doesn't bite the dust soon, our partnership is over!"

F-Poison replied nonchalantly, "Ms. Perez, who exactly are you losing your temper with?"

Diana clamped her mouth shut, though the annoyance simmering within her refused to subside,



making her incredibly uncomfortable.

Suddenly, F-Poison's eyes narrowed, her gaze turning icy. She lunged forward like a bolt of lightning,

grasping Diana's throat, "You brought a tail with you?"

"A tail? I have no idea what you're talking about!" Diana gasped for air, her eyes wide with terror.

F-Poison squinted and tapped her earpiece, "Quincy, take them out. No mercy."

"Roger that!" Quincy's resounding reply came through the earpiece.

With her orders in hand, Quincy checked her phone for the location sent to her.

Following the directions, she soon spotted Willa attempting to slip away.

Given she was young, Quincy perfectly played the part of an innocent child as she brushed past Willa.

But in her hand was a poison deadly enough to end Willa right on the spot.

Expressionless, Willa crossed paths with the child opposite her, but having grown up in the notorious

Perez family, she was no stranger to danger.

As Quincy brushed by her, Willa's right hand snapped out like a blade, targeting Quincy in a swift

motion.

Quincy had not released her poison yet. To save her own skin, she had to change course!

However, the moment she saw Willa's face, her counterattack hesitated.

Willa sensed the girl's restraint and realized she did not strike a lethal blow.

"Who are you?" Willa demanded.

Quincy whispered with a lowered voice, "Play dead, now!"

Willa's brow furrowed as countless thoughts raced through her mind.

She was uncertain whether to trust the girl before her, but she could sense the absence of murderous intent.

Since she had been spotted, playing dead seemed the best move to avoid drawing more assassins.

Plus, she had Sasha's antidote to any poison this child could wield.

So, Willa complied with Quincy's request.

Feigning a strike at Quincy, she pretended to collapse after Quincy coughed up blood.

Quincy took the hit, feigning injury to avoid suspicion.

After Willa collapsed, Quincy connected to her earpiece to report, "Boss, the target is down," and

snapped a photo of the unconscious Willa with the ring that doubled as a hidden camera.

F-Poison cut the connection after confirming the hit, oblivious to Diana's shock at recognizing Willa in the photo.

Diana was relieved her own secret dealings with F-Poison had not been exposed.

F-Poison looked up at Diana's stunned expression and asked, "What are you thinking, Ms. Perez?"

"I'm wondering if the Perez family already suspects me. That's why they sent someone to tail me."

Diana clenched her fists in genuine anxiety.

F-Poison snorted. "Don't worry. These are all members of the Nine Mystics Society. Whenever you came to meet with me, you always had a tail. Only this one was comparatively talented, so she managed to keep a closer distance."

Diana was secretly relieved. Clearly, F-Poison had no idea that the person she had just ordered killed was the person she had been looking for, the daughter of the previous F-Poison, Willa herself.

Diana felt it was for the better. What was the point of keeping Willa alive when the previous F-Poison was already dead?

"Well, that's a relief. I should get going; it's getting late," Diana said, thinking it was time to return to the Perez family's party.

F-Poison watched Diana leave. The next moment, two henchmen came out from the other room.

“Boss, should we follow her and cut her tail?”

F-Poison turned to her henchmen. “No need; those tails can be useful.”

Meanwhile, Quincy whisked Willa to a safe place. Willa, suddenly alert, grabbed Quincy by the throat

and demanded, “Spill it. Who are you?”

Quincy, caught off guard by Willa's prowess, realized that if they had fought for real earlier, she would be dead in seconds.

She tapped Willa's hand and said with difficulty, “Vi... Vivienne, Percival!”

Willa's eyes narrowed, trying to piece together why Vivienne and Percival's names were brought up.

“What do you want?” Willa did not let go but started sizing up Quincy.

Left with no choice, Quincy presented her phone, showing a coded message from Vivienne: Find Willa,

accompanied by Willa's photo.

The coded phrase was unique to the Vanguard Agency, and Willa was well aware of it.

Finally, she relaxed her grip. Since Quincy knew the Vanguard Agency's secret language, his identity

was clear—he was one of their own.

"Who exactly are you?" Willa asked, even though she knew Quincy was an ally. Her tone was icy,

making her seem somewhat standoffish.

Quincy took a moment to collect himself. Willa was even fiercer than Vivienne!

Vivienne was like a velvet knife, while Willa was a sharp steel blade!

Willa's expression turned steely, a flash of murderous intent crossing her eyes. "F-Poison was actually

nearby just now?"

Quincy was taken aback by her gaze, feeling for a moment as if he had stepped through the gates of

hell.

"I'm not sure. Even though she's my boss, I don't know her whereabouts. I found you based on the

location she sent me; otherwise, I'd have no clue where you were."

This was Quincy's first assignment since returning to Rivenwood.

Chapter 596

Willa's brow was furrowed in frustration, her fists clenched tightly.

"So many hideouts, damn it!" She muttered under her breath.

The real thorn in her side was discovering that Diana had been secretly conspiring with F-Poison! That

damned traitor!

Meanwhile, Quincy discreetly texted Vivienne for help, knowing full well she was no match for Willa.

Her only hope was to bring in reinforcements without making a sound.

But before she could relish the thought of rescue, Willa's hand clamped down on her shoulder.

"Hey, kiddo, when the grown-ups are talking, you listen, okay?" Willa said with a smile that was

anything but comforting.

Quincy attempted to resist, but it was futile.

With ease, Willa confiscated Quincy's phone, then tied her to a chair, topping her work with a peachy

little heart drawn on her forehead.

"As much as I'd love to catch up with Vivienne, I can't right now. Give it two hours after I leave, and

she'll come running to save you," Willa said as she tapped on the phone before setting it down and

making her exit.

Quincy could only watch helplessly as Willa disappeared. Glancing at the phone, she saw the message

was indeed sent, but with a two-hour delay before reaching Vivienne.

Cruel fate, indeed!

...

At the Perez Mansion.

Diana had just reached the front gate when laughter echoed from within.

Her lips pressed into a thin line, aware that Jasper was probably still fuming over today's fiasco.

But then, to her astonishment, she heard Vivienne's voice. Why was she still here?

In the Perez's backyard, Vivienne was surprised by a strawberry cheesecake decorated with the

names of Natalia, Yasmine, and her own!

Zelda, a bit embarrassed, looked at Vivienne. "I'm still perfecting my frosting skills, so just bear with it,

will you?"

Yuri, with his arm around Zelda, grinned at Vivienne, "Your aunt heard you liked strawberry

cheesecake. We wanted to know your birthday, but you said you don't even know your birthday. So, we

figured, why not celebrate it with Natalia and Yasmine?"

The truth was, Vivienne had her reasons for keeping her birthday under wraps.

Before confirming her mother was alive, she refrained from sharing personal details. Now that she

knew, there hadn't been time to tell everyone.

Though today wasn't her actual birthday, her heart felt incredibly warm.

Just days ago, she had dreamed of gorging on strawberry cheesecake until she could not take another bite, and here it was.

She had thought Zelda's recent cake obsession was just a passing fancy, never guessing it was all for this moment.

Tears welled in Vivienne's eyes. The cake might not have been a masterpiece of culinary art, with its lopsided strawberries and smeared icing, but to her, it was the most delicious, most perfect strawberry cheesecake she had ever seen.

"Uncle, Auntie, thank you," was all she could muster, her voice choked with emotion.

Maddox playfully smeared a bit of frosting on Vivienne's nose. "Happy birthday, crybaby!"

Natalia and Yasmine cheered, "Yay, we're celebrating with Vivienne!"

Vivienne's tears turned to laughter as she glanced at Percival.

"Happy birthday, Vivienne," he said softly, ruffling her hair.



She nodded, bending down to blow out the candles with Natalia and Yasmine.

Jasper watched on with a tender smile, a look of profound peace and contentment that the Perez family had seldom seen on his face.

They exchanged looks, each face illuminated by the irreplaceable joy of the moment.

The strawberry cake might not have been the most extravagant gift present, but it was undoubtedly the most priceless treasure of the day.

Diana stood at the gate, quietly observing the scene unfold before her.

Such a picture of harmony and love!

Envy and hatred flared within her, especially when her gaze fell on Vivienne. She imagined tearing that smiling face to shreds, crushing it underfoot, and throwing it into the flames!

The same way she had once hurled a rock at Sasha, she now wished to cast Vivienne into an inescapable abyss.

Biting down hard on her anger, Diana's loathing for Vivienne grew ever stronger.

An interloper—her mother was dead, so what was she doing back here?

"Go to hell, all of you!" She seethed silently.

Vivienne sensed the intense glare and turned to face it.

Of course, it was Diana.

The last person who had looked at her with such malice was... something Brooks? She shrugged it off.

As everyone followed Vivienne's gaze to Diana at the door, their expressions varied, yet none seemed pleased at her arrival.

Jasper stepped forward. "Diana, I want to speak with you in the study."

Regaining her composure, Diana nodded silently.

Jasper shot Maddox a warning look. "Can't you be a little more discreet?"

As if on cue, Vivienne received Quincy's SOS text. Putting away her phone, she said, "Thanks, but we've got something else to take care of."

Maddox gave Percival and Vivienne a knowing look, a mischievous twinkle in his eye. "Oh, are you two planning a little date? Need me to set you up with a round..." Read at [Drămanovels.com](http://Drămanovels.com)

"Round, round, round, I'll make you round!" Jasper did not let Maddox finish his tease, swinging his cane in a wide arc, aiming for Maddox's behind.

Yuri and Zelda were used to the family antics, smiling as they ushered Percival and Vivienne out the door.

From the yard, Maddox, who was dodging Jasper's playful wrath, yelled, "Those are mine!"

Yuri quietly stepped in front of Vivienne, blocking the view of the commotion. "Don't worry about it, Vivienne. Splurge a little!"

Vivienne chuckled under her breath. "Alright, I'll come back to visit you all soon."

"Deal!" Zelda leaned on Yuri's shoulder, waving cheerfully at Vivienne.

After Vivienne had left, Jasper, feeling that he had doled out enough justice, lectured Maddox about respecting his elders before retreating to his study.

#### Chapter 597

In the study, Diana had already prepared a cup of coffee for Jasper, waiting in the silent room for his arrival.

As soon as Jasper stepped in, he noticed the red rims around Diana's eyes, a clear sign of her guilt about the day's earlier events.

Jasper had always been stern with the boys in the household, quick to wield his walking stick when they stepped out of line. But with the girls, it was a different story; he rarely had a harsh word to say.

It was not just out of a fondness for Sasha, who had gone missing long ago. He simply believed that girls were to be cherished.

Even when Natalia and Yasmine, the mischievous ones, had nearly shaved off their eyebrows with Maddox's razor, he had only chuckled and playfully tapped them on the head.

He had never laid a finger in anger on Diana, too.

Today, however, Jasper was truly upset.

He had raised Diana; he knew her every mood and thought. How could he not see what was on her mind?

Diana didn't take kindly to Vivienne and was not particularly fond of Natalia and Yasmine either. He was well aware of that.

"Dad," Diana said, her voice breaking as tears spilled over.

Normally, Jasper would have handed her a tissue or teased gently, "What's got my little girl crying this time?"

But not today. He sat down heavily in his chair, his usual warmth replaced by a brooding silence.

After a while, Diana stopped crying and hung her head in silence.

Jasper let out a deep sigh, his words laden with disappointment, "Diana, you really crossed the line today."

"Dad, I swear I didn't know Dracon had bought a fake. I was deceived, too. I'm truly sorry," Diana hurriedly explained.

"We, the Linklaters, would never stoop to giving fake gifts. There are plenty of treasures in our family that could outshine the Rainbow Opal. What angers me is how you accused Vivienne in front of Dracon!"

Jasper's words sent a jolt through Diana. "Dad, how could I accuse Vivienne? I..."

"Dracon doesn't even know Vivienne. How could he harbor such animosity towards her?" Jasper tapped his cane, his eyes flashing with anger.

Diana bit her lip and recounted the incident where Vivienne had saved Yorick at the Linklaters' estate.

"That day, Vivienne embarrassed Dracon. So today, I..."

"You might as well admit that you told him all about Vivienne!" Jasper's voice was heavy with disappointment. "Diana, how would Dracon know about Vivienne being the Specter Healer if you hadn't

told him? Do you really think I'm senile?"

Speechless, Diana knew that Yorick must have shared the incident with Jasper. They had been inseparable in their youth and remained close in their later years, sharing everything.

Yorick, being who he was, would certainly have known Vivienne's true identity. Nothing that happened within the Linklater family escaped his notice, including Diana's slander about Vivienne to Dracon.

Dracon had bluntly revealed Vivienne's identity as the Specter Healer, and it was indeed deliberate. He did not even know Vivienne, let alone have a reason to investigate her.

When Diana realized what he had done, she knew she was in trouble, but it was too late to stop Dracon's words.

Jasper softened his tone and sighed deeply. "Diana, I know you feel threatened by Vivienne's arrival.

You're scared of losing your place in my heart or being driven out by the Perez family."

Diana remained silent, knowing there was no point in denying it now.

Jasper continued, "My foolish child, if I didn't see you as my own, would I have raised you all these years? Don't think of yourself as just Sasha's replacement. You are Diana, my third daughter, my

precious gem!"

Diana's eyes brimmed with tears as she looked at Jasper.

Jasper let out another sigh, his voice turning gentle. "You, Sasha, Willa – I've never shown favoritism. I

may have been preoccupied with finding Sasha, but I've never neglected you. I've prepared your

wedding gift; just tell me who you wish to marry, and I'll arrange the wedding. As for my will..."

Diana's eyes flickered with nervousness. "Dad, I..."

Jasper waved her off, "Never mind, don't do this again. I treat all my children equally."

Diana nodded. "I understand, Dad."

"Alright, it's late. Get some rest. And don't let this happen again. I'll deal with your brother myself."

Diana left the study, pausing at the door, her eyes reflecting a deep sadness.

If Vivienne returned, what place would she have left? Vivienne and Maddox were cut from the same

cloth; once they banded together, she would be left out in the cold.

A dark look crossed Diana's eyes. "Vivienne, you must die!"

Meanwhile...

Vivienne, following a tip from Quincy, found her bound and struggling for freedom.

With a look of exasperation, Quincy pleaded, "Can you two just help me out of these ropes first?" New

chapter available on Dramanovels.com

Still chuckling, Vivienne began to untie Quincy, eyeing the cute little heart sticker on her forehead.

"That's actually kind of a good look for you."

Quincy scrunched her face in disgust as she wiped away the drawing, muttering, "It was Willa."

Vivienne's laughter froze on her face. "Willa?"

"Yeah, and the one who ordered the hit on me was F-Poison. Looks like Willa was this close to sniffing out her hideout." Quincy recapped the night's events.

"Did you manage to plant a tracker on her?" Vivienne inquired.

Quincy nodded, then gestured to a nearby trash can, "But she stripped it off before she left. Oh, and she mentioned that it's not time for you to meet her yet."

Chapter 598

Vivienne's gaze sharpened for a moment.

Karen must have told Willa she was still alive!

Otherwise, Willa would never have said those words.



No wonder Willa had managed to slip away from the Nine Mystics Society time and again. It seemed

Karen had been helping her all along!

With this realization, a chill seemed to emanate from Vivienne, her already cool complexion taking on an added frost.

To think Karen would meet Willa and not come forward to meet her?

Just great!

Percival sensed the resentment radiating from Vivienne and gently touched her shoulder.

Vivienne took a deep breath, calming herself down. "What else did she say?"

"Nothing much, and it looked like she didn't even know F-Poison was nearby. It was actually F-Poison who spotted her first."

Listening to Quincy's words, Vivienne could roughly guess why Willa was there today.

She must have followed someone here.

And the only person not in Vivienne's sight that day was Diana.

Draven had also sent word that the Nine Mystics Society lost track of Diana near where Willa was spotted.

It seemed Diana truly knew F-Poison's whereabouts!

Since Willa could be here with Diana, it meant Karen also had her suspicions about Diana.

But what would Karen do next?

Meanwhile, when Willa returned home, she found Karen staring blankly at a pot of overcooked instant noodles.

"Willa, you're finally back. I've missed you so much." Karen looked up from the couch, her eyes filled with longing.

Willa's mouth twitched. "Sasha, maybe you shouldn't cook next time."

Was this her way of missing her cooking?

Within a week, three pots were ruined, five bowls were broken, and even a whole box of instant noodles had fallen victim to disaster!

Karen laughed awkwardly. "Did you find out anything today?"

"Almost got caught by your daughter's people, but it was her mole inside GTO."

Karen nodded. "A young girl, right? Seems like F-Poison has caught on to you. Be careful when you

follow Diana next time."

With just a simple sentence, Karen had guessed Willa's evening ordeal.

Willa quickly prepared a bowl of instant noodles for Karen. "Sasha, what's your plan for Diana?"

Karen blew on the steaming noodles and said slowly, "It's almost time."

It was almost time to bring things to a close with Diana.

Willa did not say more, knowing Karen had everything under control.

...

On the way home, Percival received a call from Griffin.

"Percival, my dad wants to meet you tomorrow. You free?"

Percival's lips curved in a smile. "I am. See you tomorrow."

After hanging up, Vivienne looked knowingly at Percival. "Looks like your plan is halfway there."

"All thanks to my wife's brilliant idea." Percival smoothly parked in front of her home and glanced at

Vivienne, a curious light flickering in his eyes.

Vivienne was momentarily taken aback, then felt a hand gently lifting her chin.

Percival's handsome face loomed closer until it filled her vision. "Happy birthday, Vivienne."

She smiled faintly, "You know it's not my birthday today."

"What I mean is," Percival's fingertips grazed her lips with infinite tenderness, word by word, he asked,

"When your real birthday comes, would you become my true wife?"

Vivienne could not remember how she managed to escape from Percival's grasp and "flee" back to her bed.

All she knew was that her heart was pounding as if it would burst out of her chest, beating like thunder and lightning.

That kind of thing...

She was not resistant to it at all, especially when it involved Percival.

But whenever she thought it through, her heart raced uncontrollably.

She could not imagine the intimacy, the explosive chemistry, the fervor.

Despite teasing Percival now and then, when it came to the real deal, she became shy.

After all, she had no experience!

Though she knew the male body well and could point out every part even with her eyes closed.

She had seen her fair share of 'educational' films – they were all the same.

But she could not picture Percival like that.

He seemed quite large!

"Ah!"

Vivienne buried her face in her pillow, blushing like a teen girl fantasizing about her crush for the first time.

Thaddeus jumped at the sound in the bathroom. Half-awake, he knocked on her door, "Vivienne, having a nightmare?"

Snapping out of it, Vivienne retorted, "No, now go back to sleep!"

Thaddeus yawned. "I did, you too, sleep well. Goodnight."

"Goodnight!" Vivienne patted her cheeks.

They were warm; she knew without a mirror that her face must be beet red.

Vivienne recited a calming mantra ten times to settle her nerves.

Thank goodness she was alone, or her reputation as the senior of Emerald Mountain and the young master of the Nine Mystics Society would be shot!

The next morning, Vivienne woke up to a delicious smell from the living room.

She opened the door to find Percival already sitting at the dining table, sharing a meal with Dorian's family.

"Vivienne, you're up? Wash your hands and join us for breakfast." Cordelia was keeping food warm for her and took some out of the pot.

Vivienne nodded, her gaze flitting away from Percival's as if she could not bear to look him in the eye.

After all, she had dreamed about him all night long!

Percival, noticing Vivienne's evasive eyes, could not help but touch his face. Was he really that repulsive now?

He must have really spooked the poor girl last night!

With serious business at hand, the two managed to act normally again.

Vivienne understood; after all, the Martinez family was in the business of developing weapons for the nation—they did not need many partners.

Clearly, the Martinez family was not getting the protection they expected and had to look for

alternatives.

Percival nodded. "If it were not for the situation with Leopold, we probably wouldn't even get a chance to meet Stellan."

Chapter 599

As they chatted, the pair arrived at the meeting spot.

Griffin was waiting outside, and upon spotting the duo, she bounded over with earnest warmth.

Being the daughter of the Martinez family, Griffin was inevitably a bit biased toward her own kin.

Her complete trust in Vivienne and Percival was undeniable; otherwise, she would not have

collaborated with Vivienne on developing a new bomb detection device.

Griffin's role was pivotal in arranging for Stellan to come out for this meeting.

"Vivienne, my dad came alone, without the company's legal team. You guys got this," Griffin cheered, pumping her fist in encouragement.

Vivienne understood. Stellan's choice to come without his lawyers meant he was not planning to finalize anything today.

He knew that relying on the Vanguard Agency would ultimately spell trouble for the Martinez family.

The Martinez family was an ancient warrior lineage that came out of seclusion, but they lacked

venerated elders like those in the Perez family. It was only Stellan keeping up appearances, along with

Griffin, who was a rare prodigy in the arms industry.

This was the only way the Martinez family could maintain their status.

But this recent incident, almost costing them Griffin, was a clear sign that someone was targeting the

Martinez family.

If they did not adapt, the road ahead would be rocky indeed!

Inside the café, Stellan sat at a table, exuding a casual vibe in his leisurewear, quite the opposite of

Vivienne's expectation of a suit and tie. His demeanor, though relaxed, carried an air of authority that

demanding respect.

Griffin let go of Vivienne's hand and led the way, introducing, "Dad, this is the Vivienne Hawthorn I told

you about, and her husband, Percival Ellington."

Stellan stood up, his face breaking into a warm smile as he extended his hand, "Mr. Ellington, Ms.

Hawthorn, a pleasure to meet you both."

Percival shook his hand. "Mr. Martinez, it's good to meet you."



With pleasantries exchanged, they all took their seats.

Griffin, knowing her place, stayed quiet and busied herself with coffee for everyone.

Stellan broke the ice. "I've always heard from Griffin how well Ms. Hawthorn has looked after her. I

apologize for not expressing my gratitude sooner."

Vivienne smiled. "If anyone should apologize, it's me to you, Mr. Martinez. My junior did something

regrettable to your family, and I failed to guide him."

Stellan waved off the apology. "I've known Leopold since he was a boy. He might be a bit headstrong,

but he's a good kid. No blame lies with him."

Although Stellan rarely made public appearances, sending Griffin out to make contact with Leopold's

family meant he was well-informed about them.

Considering his daughter had been chasing after Leopold for years, it was impossible for him not to

know the young man well.

Vivienne could tell from Stellan's words that he held Leopold in high regard.

It seemed that Leopold had already won the favor of his future father-in-law.

After some more small talk, they finally ventured into the heart of the matter.

"Mr. Martinez, what are your thoughts on the Ellington Group collaborating with your company?"

Percival inquired.

Stellan laced his fingers together, rubbing his thumbs thoughtfully. "Mr. Ellington, you must be aware of what the Martinez family specializes in. As a former deputy director of the Vanguard Agency, what's your true motive for seeking a partnership with the Martinez Group?"

Percival was prepared for a straightforward question but not quite so blunt. He chuckled. "Money."

Stellan let out a hearty laugh at Percival's response. "Mr. Ellington, we both know the score. Let's be frank with each other."

Percival nodded and handed Stellan a business card. "The company that truly wants to collaborate with Martinez Tech Group is this one."

Stellan's eyes widened in disbelief. "You're Mr. Percy!"

Griffin, who was pouring coffee, nearly missed the cup. She looked up at Percival, unable to believe that her brother-in-law was the legendary Mr. Percy!

Years ago, when the Martinez family had broken away from the ancient warrior lineages, times were

tough, and updating their weaponry was a challenge. The pressure was immense.

Over time, internal fractures appeared, compounded by the pressure from their ancestral lineage. At

fifteen, the weight on Stellan reached a peak.

The Martinez family was on the brink of losing everything.

Back in the day, the Martinez family had weathered the storm, narrowly avoiding the crushing pressure

of the ancient warrior lineages and regaining the top brass's trust, all thanks to a single infusion of

cash.

Stellan had tried to investigate this Mr. Percy, but the man was a ghost, leaving not a single trace to

follow.

And yet, it turned out to be Percival!

Stellan looked at Percival solemnly, a flicker of doubt passing through his eyes.

There was no denying that Percival had been a benefactor to him and the entire Martinez family. But

the matter of biochemical weapons was of utmost importance, especially given their inherent dangers

—a single weapon could obliterate a city in seconds!

Stellan laid Mr. Percy's business card on the table, his fingertip lightly tapping the corner: "Mr. Ellington,

what do you want with biochemical weapons?" Content of Dramanovels.com

Percival exhaled silently, his smile persisting. "Vance escaped punishment from the organization this

time, and I can imagine, Mr. Martinez, that you're quite puzzled. Apart from Vance, who else within the

Vanguard Agency wishes to see the Martinez family's demise?"

Stellan's gaze narrowed.

Indeed, Vance's theft of the biochemical weapon's secrets was a matter of high treason, grounds

enough to apprehend him as a spy.

Even if he were spared his life, there was no way he would be allowed to remain within the Vanguard

Agency.

Yet, there he was, unscathed, the so-called 'punishment' nothing more than a smokescreen.

The person behind all this was the real threat aiming to snatch the Martinez family's biochemical

weapon!

Chapter 600

Stellan's grip tightened involuntarily.

Percival was right.

Ever since Griffin's paper on the new bomb technology had gone missing, Stellan had felt something amiss, and now that he had heard GTO had managed to develop the new bomb, his concerns deepened. He knew there were unspeakable secrets within the Vanguard Agency!

But it was all speculation, and Stellan had no one to voice his suspicions to.

That was why he had slowed down the pace of the development of biochemical weapons.

But after so many years of dragging his feet, how much longer could he delay?

Sooner or later, the biochemical weapons would be traded through the Martinez family's channels, and eventually, they would lose control!

Biochemical weapons were different from other arms. Guns and bombs could still be contained if they got into the wrong hands, but a biochemical weapon...

The consequences could be disastrous.

Percival had hit the nail on the head with every word!

Seeing Stellan's expression soften, Percival pressed on, "Mr. Martinez, I assure you none of your worries will come to pass. I will root out anyone with a double agenda. I was a special operative for the Vanguard Agency, and even though I've left, I haven't forgotten my core values."

Stellan bit his lower lip, his gaze lingering on Percival as the hesitation slowly receded.

“What ever happened to that batch of weapons I handed off to you?”

A slight smile crossed Percival’s face.

Back then, he had no choice but to deal with the Martinez family. After Lark’s death, the Agency was in chaos, and Percival was on the trail of a significant crime syndicate but desperately short on firepower, which complicated the mission.

As the criminals were about to slip across the border, he had to strike a risky bargain with the Martinez family using his alias, Mr. Percy.

Thankfully, Micah played mediator, convincing Stellan to agree to the deal.

That move ensured the success of the mission, and the weapons once given to Mr. Percy were eventually reclaimed by the Vanguard Agency.

Stellan had personally overseen the reclamation.

As Percival recounted the events, Stellan’s worries fully dissipated.

“You must promise me there can be no slip-ups with the biochemical weapons. And you can’t take full

control. How much you'll need and when it's completed will be at the discretion of the Martinez family!"

"Of course, it's the Martinez family's asset. I just need to ensure it stays obedient."

Percival extended his hand, "Mr. Martinez, here's to a successful partnership."

"To success." Stellan shook Percival's hand, the wariness in his eyes giving way to calm composure.

Griffin winked at Vivienne, signaling mission accomplished!

...

After bidding farewell to the Martinez family, Percival treated Vivienne to a hearty beef stew.

"Working with the Martinez family is bound to put pressure on you guys from the Agency," Vivienne

remarked, blowing on a piece of beef before savoring it.

Indeed, nothing beats a good beef stew!

Percival silently offered her more meat. "Don't worry, someone can handle the pressure."

Vivienne's lips curled into a smile. Indeed, they had two strong allies!

As soon as the Martinez family and the Ellington Group's deal was sealed, the phones in the

Rivenwood Vanguard Agency's director and deputy director's offices rang incessantly.

"Yes, yes, I've heard. No idea, though, not my guy. You know how it went down between us. Maybe ask

Micah?" Vance chuckled into the phone.

"My Guy? He resigned. Even the law can't touch him now. Plus, I didn't write or approve his resignation. Go ask Vance!" Micah played dumb on the other end.

Back at the Sea City main office, Webster was fuming!

With a slam, Webster hung up the phone.

Micah cleaned his ear, glancing at Vance. "As the director, you push everything onto your deputy. Is that how you lead?"

Vance leisurely sipped his tea. "If you can't lead a team, you'll work yourself to death."

Micah rolled his eyes and left, leaning on his cane.

Vance chuckled to himself, his gaze growing serious as Micah departed.

Percival was working with the Martinez family. What did that mean for his own dealings with them?

After all, the Martinez family was an ancient warrior lineage.

Vance felt uncertain about Percival's motives.

It took five rings before Percival casually picked up Vance's call.



"Mr. Edwards, what can I do for you?" Percival sipped his wine, a smirk on his lips.

Vance inhaled deeply. "What's this business with the Martinez family?"

Percival knew Vance would inquire about this. He leaned back, swirling his wine glass, saying, "Vance,

our initial agreement, as I recall, has nothing to do with this matter, has it?"

Listening as Percival shifted from addressing him as Mr. Edwards to Vance, Vance knew this was no

joke.

But he was at a loss.

For a moment, he couldn't quite discern whether their partnership was ultimately more beneficial to him

or Percival.

"Don't forget, the Martinez family is an ancient warrior lineage," Vance warned, his tone carrying a note

of caution.

Percival's lips curved into a smile, a cold glint in his eyes. "Did I ever tell you I wouldn't work with an

ancient warrior lineage?"

"You!" Vance felt a frustrating sense of being choked with anger. "Percival, if you don't honor our

agreement, I might just turn the tables on you!"

"Sure, then I'll just collaborate with more ancient warrior lineages," Percival retorted nonchalantly.

Vance was speechless, realizing in this instant how empty words could be!

The old saying "with age comes wisdom" did not necessarily hold true.

Seeing Vance's softened stance, Percival eased the pressure. "Remember the 'Morning Glory' I

mentioned to you?"

"Not necessarily," Percival did not elaborate.

Vance was aware of his suspicions about a mole within the Vanguard Agency, and there was no need

to lay everything out in the open.

"Alright, I've got it."

Just as Vance was about to hang up, Percival called out, "Vance, there's a favor I need to ask of you."

When Percival spoke up, it wasn't a matter of asking; it was an obligation.

Vance, fully aware of the stakes, couldn't help but scoff. "We've gone beyond the need for such

formalities."

"I need the detailed files on the 'Destruction Plan' operative from back in the day."