

Million-Dollar 611

Chapter 611

The eldest of the Perez Family, Luke, was known as the most down-to-earth. The siblings had a running joke that any trouble found its way onto his broad shoulders by default.

In Luke's absence, the scapegoat duties fell onto Maddox, though it was not quite fair to say he was just a fall guy. More often than not, he was the ringleader of their shenanigans.

Yuri leaned back in his chair, eyeing his sister Sasha. "Our brothers, Luke and Fredrick have come here in Rivenwood with their families. Dad wants to throw a big reunion bash to officially announce your return. What do you say?"

Karen pressed her lips together, a beer in hand. "The timing isn't right."

She had parted ways with the Vanguard Agency years ago but had not made her existence public since.

Revealing herself now could stir up a hornet's nest.

Maddox, usually the joker, adopted a serious demeanor. "I share the same concern. Percival mentioned he's onto something, still investigating. Best to keep a low profile for now."

Karen raised an eyebrow, not having heard anything from Percival or Vivienne. "Frost, who's on your

radar?"

Vivienne hesitated before answering. "We're looking into it. I'll fill you in once we have something solid."

Karen knew her daughter well. The fact that Vivienne held back meant the suspect was likely someone

crucial to Karen herself. Otherwise, Vivienne would never choose silence.

Clutching her beer, a strange flicker crossed Karen's eyes.

Suddenly, Vivienne's phone rang. "Vivienne, is your mother there?" Percival's voice was anxious.

"Yes, what's up?" Vivienne switched to speakerphone. "Spill it!"

"Master, we found a signal source in the remnants at F-Poison's last haunt. It's locked tight." Percival

sounded grave, giving the matter utmost importance.

Karen grabbed Vivienne's wrist, booting up her micro-computer. "Patch into Frost's system."

"Right." Percival stayed on the line, linking the signal source to Vivienne's computer.

Minutes later, Karen pinpointed a red dot on the satellite map. "It's at Vance's place, that apartment he

bought last month!"

Percival flinched. "You sure it's Vance?"

"Without a doubt." Karen had already dug into the property's transaction history. Vance had used multiple aliases, but she had traced them all.

Percival took a deep breath. "Understood."

About to end the call, Vivienne could not resist a dig. "Mr. Wolf, why run to your mentor for this small fry

stuff instead of me?"

Percival swallowed hard, then softly replied, "Vivienne, I don't want you to overwork yourself."

Truth be told, both he and Vivienne were formidable hackers trained by Karen herself, and their skills were about equal.

If Percival hit a wall, Vivienne might not fare any better.

Thus, with urgency pressing, Percival turned directly to Karen.

Vivienne, somewhat appeased, hung up before Karen could scold her.

Karen draped an arm over Vivienne's shoulder, her voice dripping with mock resentment. "Men get wives and forget their moms. And you? Are you ready to ditch your mother now?"

Vivienne met her gaze, firm and earnest. "No, it's Mr. Wolf who's ditching his mentor."

They shared a knowing smile.

After hanging up, Percival promptly headed to the signal source's location.

He didn't alert anyone within the Vanguard Agency, not out of distrust, but because he was about to confront the Agency's director, so he could not possibly let the agency agents do it.

Arriving near the apartment, Percival sealed off all exits and pressed the doorbell.

A shadow moved inside, and with a click, the lock turned, but the door remained closed.

Percival's lips curved in a smirk. With a swift kick, the door flew open.

Vance stood there, gun in hand, aimed straight at Percival's forehead. Yet, his own neck was firmly in

Percival's grasp.

The surprise in Vance's eyes was unmistakable. "You?"

Percival's curiosity was piqued. "Why shouldn't it be me?"

Vance holstered his weapon, taking in the seamless lockdown of his surroundings. He stepped aside, letting Percival in.

"What brings you here?" Vance queried.

"Looking for someone." Percival's frown deepened as he scanned the room, confirming Vance was

alone.

Vance fetched a bottle of water from the fridge. "You could've just called. Why all the fuss to come here?"

Percival unscrewed the cap, the bottle too full, spilling water as he opened it. "Vance, you know exactly why I'm here."

Vance's facade of calm crumbled. He looked up at Percival, his bottle half empty.

"Did you find something at today's kidnapping site?"

Percival's gaze was as deep and treacherous as the ocean, ready to swallow anything on its surface.

His laugh was mocking. "What do you think I found, Vance?"

Vance trembled slightly, setting the bottle down, struggling for composure. "Nothing."

"This apartment—is this the one you bought for Noah?" Percival leaned back, watching Vance casually.

Vance's hands clenched together. "Can we keep this between us? I'll explain everything. About the explosion..."

Percival's eyes blazed with intensity as he locked his gaze on Vance. "You're well aware of the blast,

Vance. Do you have any idea how many of our guys are still laid up in the hospital? How many will never stand again because of this op? How many are still lying in comas?" Content belongs to

Drqmanovels.com

If it were not for the fact that Percival needed evidence from Vance right now, he would have thrown a punch at him without a second thought.

Nothing grated on Percival more than the idea of sacrificing one's own people for one's personal gain.

And Vance had managed to hit that nerve twice in a row!

Without further words, Percival sat in silence across from Vance, waiting for him to break.

After what seemed like an eternity, Vance finally deflated. He exhaled slowly and leaned back.

Chapter 612

Percival plugged the USB drive into his tablet, and his eyes narrowed with surprise as a video played before him.

The video depicted the exact scene where Percival was currently seated, but instead of him, it was a woman without a face!

Her figure was identical to F-Poison's!

She wore wireless earbuds and was reciting the exact words that had echoed over the cliff earlier that

day.

There was no doubt about it – she was F-Poison!

The video continued until the moment the android exploded, and F-Poison's tablet smoked and shattered.

Afterward, she swiftly fled the scene, vanishing without a trace.

Yet, throughout the video, there was no sign of Noah.

Vance watched Percival finish the video and said slowly, "I only ever told Noah about this apartment.

But I also told him that you had discovered my extensive property investments and knew all my secrets."

Percival set the tablet down. So, Noah wanted to exploit this leak to ultimately clear his own name.

Either Vance would take the fall for him, or all the blame would be dumped on Percival!

Elsewhere, F-Poison strapped on a new mask, the corners of her eyes heavy with fury as she stared at her reflection.

"Boss, Karen somehow survived. What's going on here?"

F-Poison struck out in anger. "You're asking me? Who the hell should I ask? After all these years of funding you, you can't even handle one little girl!"

Noah spat out blood, his aged body unable to withstand her powerful slap.

Struggling, he slowly rose from the ground. "My mistake. I personally confirmed Karen's death. I never imagined she'd fake it, just like Ulysses Sheldon, playing dead."

"You're useless! Our bionic secrets are out, and we can't let Karen and her damned daughter find any more leads!"

F-Poison barked with a strong hint of rage in her eyes, which then settled into a dark chuckle.

"How intriguing. Karen is intriguing, and her daughter even more so. Alright, then. I'll entertain them, play their little game. I want to see what tricks Karen has up her sleeve!"

Noah, with a half-raised brow, saw the sinister look in the mirror and bowed his head.

No matter how much time passed, those eyes still sent a shiver down his spine.

Noah returned to his place, his mind increasingly restless.

Adding up the years, he had been with the Vanguard Agency since he was twenty, fighting alongside

Yorick until now, retiring and being rehired, nearly sixty years in total.

He never thought he could last this long.

Noah frowned deeply, gazing at the two photographs on the coffee table.

One was a picture with Yorick; the other was of his three apprentices gathered around him, his chest adorned with a Medal of Honor.

Noah stared deeply at Karen's face in the photo.

Her smiling lips, bright eyes, and her voice echoed in his ears, "Master, I'll be your daughter, your personal little comfort!"

Noah closed his eyes and slammed the photograph face down on the table.

"Karen, why didn't you just die for real!"

...

At a tavern in Rivenwood.

Vance summoned Micah to a private room.

"What do you want?" Micah asked impatiently, sitting across from Vance.

Vance half-closed his eyes and spoke seriously, "I know we've never gotten along. When Karen was

alive, you fought together against me. After her death, you showed no mercy. If it were not for our mentor's sake, we'd have cut ties long ago."

"Are you dying of cancer?" Micah asked with furrowed brows.

Vance exhaled silently. "In the entire Vanguard Agency, the only person I trust besides Karen is you."

Micah looked at Vance as if he had never truly known the man before him, "At your age, can you stop with the nauseating talk?"

"Micah, I'm serious!" Vance banged the table, "Will you let me finish?"

"Go on," Micah relaxed, ready to listen.

Vance continued, "Regarding the cliff side explosion, I have a suspect, someone only you and I can investigate."

Micah finally sat up straight, "I've read the report Thomas submitted on the explosion. Diana kidnapped Vivienne and Zelda, a dispute led to the blast, and F-Poison's trace was at the scene. What else have you found?"

"Noah."

Micah paused, "What did you say?"

"I suspect Noah is a mole for GTO. The explosion was caused by explosive particles in Vanguard

Agency's firearms, leading to chaos at the scene. And those firearms were approved by Noah."

"Bullshit!" Micah slammed his hand down, shattering the table's edge, "Have you gone mad with ambition? Now you suspect our mentor!"

Vance faced Micah's rage with a calm gaze and firm tone, "I swear on my honor, my suspicions are founded. Micah, there's something off about Noah!"

"Go to hell. Do you even have any honor?" Micah overturned his chair and stormed out in fury.

Just as he reached the door, he saw someone standing there.

Upon recognizing the face before him, Micah incredulously stepped back.

"You... you're... Lark!"

Karen stepped in, closing the door behind her, a beautiful curve on her lips. "Micah, long time no see."

Vance was clearly not expecting to see his long-deceased comrade here. He had thought it would be Percival.

In their youth, Karen often mocked Vance's sleaziness, leaving the big man speechless.

It was always Noah who intervened, bringing peace.

Vance couldn't help but feel a twinge of nostalgia as he heard those words once again.

Micah rubbed his eyes in disbelief. Karen was alive! Read at Dramanovels.com

"Knock it off, Micah. What, you got cataracts too?" Karen chided with a look of disdain.

Unable to contain himself any longer, Micah went in for a hug, his gesture driven by intense emotion

rather than romance.

He gripped Karen's shoulders, eyes scanning her face. "Boss, is it really you? You're back for real? You

didn't die!"

Karen nodded. "Yeah, I'm still kicking."

Vance sauntered over and pinched Micah's cheek.

"Ouch, damn it!" Micah cursed, "You out of your mind?!"

Vance, still in a daze, barely registered Micah's complaint. "It's really you, Lark. You're alive!"

Chapter 613

As the mention of the explosion lingered in the air, a silence fell among the three.

There was no need for words; it was clear Karen had caught on to what Vance had just said.

Karen sat down, her gaze lifting to meet Vance's. "I'm on board with your idea."

After years of covert investigation, even if Vivienne had the intention to conceal the truth, how could she have truly kept it from Karen?

Over the years, Karen had scrutinized everyone involved in the "Destruction Plan," even her follower, Micah.

Friend or foe, every suspect had been cleared.

In the end, the least likely person became a possibility once more.

Micah stepped forward, trying to sway Karen's thoughts. "Boss, that's our mentor, our guide through thick and thin!"

"I know." Karen's eyes held Micah's, her words measured and heavy. "For over a decade, I've abandoned my daughter, forsaken my comrades, lived under aliases, too afraid to show my face. It wasn't to end up doubting my mentor at the final hour."

Micah's gaze shook with the gravity of her words. When Karen spoke with such conviction, he knew there was no turning back.

Next door, Vivienne watched the monitors with a somber expression. When she saw the fleeting pain

cross Karen's face, her heart twisted in empathy.

Percival wrapped an arm around Vivienne's shoulders, squeezing gently. "We couldn't have kept this from her forever. She was bound to find out sooner or later."

Vivienne nodded. "Yeah, my mom's tough. But Micah, he's going to have a hard time swallowing this pill."

Percival's lips quirked in a wry smile. "He'll come around. Master's sidekick isn't that fragile."

Exchanging a knowing look, Percival and Vivienne shared a light chuckle before turning their attention back to the surveillance screens.

After a long moment, Micah collected himself. "Boss, what's our next move?"

Karen's lips curved into a thin smile. "We don't have concrete evidence yet. We need him to make his move."

Vance nodded. "Exactly, he's been entrenched in Vanguard Agency for years; he won't act rashly. If we confront him without proof, it'll backfire. Micah, I need your help."

"With you two in the light and me in the shadows, plus Percival on our side, he's bound to slip up,"

Karen stated.

With a heavy nod, Micah agreed, "Alright, what leads do we have?"

Karen looked up at the surveillance camera and gestured with her finger.

Sighing, Vivienne, in the next room, slapped a folder onto Percival's chest, "Take this to your mentor."

Taking the folder, Percival pinched Vivienne's cheek. Karen was probably the only person in this world who could render Vivienne so helpless.

Knocking on the door, Percival delivered the information to Karen.

"Master, this is from Vivienne," he said, handing over the documents before casting a glance at Micah and quietly exiting, preferring the comfort of his wife's company.

Karen spread out the material on the table, presenting it to Vance and Micah.

They both pored over the detailed files, their expressions growing increasingly grim.

"This case brought Noah to prominence, earning him a top commendation, three first-class merits, and two seconds. It's also how we first cracked into GTO," Karen explained.

It was initially a human trafficking case. Yorick led the Vanguard Agency team, with Noah as his second-in-command. When Yorick was injured, Noah took charge, and in pursuing the traffickers, they

stumbled upon the horrifying truth—it was a virus research lab!

This lab was GTO's first experimental site that Vanguard Agency had found.

Since then, a thirty-year war had raged between Vanguard Agency and GTO.

During this time, Noah's reputation soared as he thwarted multiple GTO schemes, eventually securing his current status.

As Vance and Micah finished reviewing the case files, their faces betrayed a maelstrom of emotions.

"I remember when we first joined Vanguard Agency, Yorick told us about this," Vance said, his brows knitted.

"Yes, he mentioned Noah single-handedly saved twelve kids and personally arranged for their return home," Micah clenched his teeth, "but why does this file say there were only ten kids kidnapped by GTO?"

Karen tapped her fingers on the table, "This file came from an undercover my daughter planted in GTO.

To monitor each child's reactions, they kept detailed records."

"So, who are the other two children the boss reported?" Micah queried.

Vance's eyes narrowed, a realization dawning on him.

"Got it, boss. And you? What will you do?" Micah asked.

Karen chuckled. "Now that I'm exposed, they won't let me be. They'll try to find me, and when they do, he'll come knocking."

"But isn't that dangerous for you? I could send someone to protect you..."

The trio stood up, exchanging quick, knowing glances.

Karen and Micah put their hands together, palms touching in solidarity, while Vance raised his for a high-five.

Karen could not help but let out a sigh of exasperation. "After all these years, you still can't sync up with us."

Vance rubbed his nose awkwardly, trying to laugh it off. "Here's to pulling this off," he said, hoping to salvage the moment.

With that, he gathered his papers and headed out of the diner.

Micah did not linger either, aware that every move from here on out was critical.

If Noah turned out to be a mole, he would walk right into their trap!

Vivienne watched the lack of coordination among them, let out a heavy sigh, and pulled out her cell phone to call Quincy.

"Stand by. It's go time!" She declared with determination.

Chapter 614

In the bustling heart of the city, the revered Vanguard Agency, spearheaded by the esteemed Martinez family, initiated a thorough housecleaning operation.

Vintage cases, some yellowed with the patina of age, were dusted off and brought into the unforgiving light of scrutiny.

The notorious GTO, Vanguard's arch-nemesis, had a laundry list of files that demanded an exhaustive purge.

Vance was dispatched to the sprawling metropolis of Sea City for advanced training while Micah, armed with Rivenwood's finest, dived into the backlog of cases.

From the headquarters, a specialized task force was deployed to sift through Rivenwood's archives, each folder a Pandora's box of secrets.

This was not the first rodeo for the seasoned agents of Vanguard; they viewed the entire affair with a sense of déjà vu.

The newly minted Captain Thomas found himself adrift without the Director, shadowing the Deputy

Director as a trusty sidekick to the temporary helmsman.

As the task force combed through the cases, they hit a roadblock with a recent explosion case, their

expressions clouding with intrigue.

"Captain Thomas, are you absolutely certain these were the only people at the scene?" came the

probing question.

Thomas nodded firmly. "I'm positive. Aside from our agents, only Percival and Vivienne were present.

No one else."

"And what about this woman?" The task force brandished a grainy photograph where an extra figure

was unmistakably present at the crime scene.

"I haven't the foggiest," Thomas retorted with the stubbornness of a mule.

Such defiance only served to irk the task force, leading to the detainment of Thomas and the two squad

leaders for further inquiry. This sent ripples of unease throughout the rank and file of Vanguard Agency.

Micah, now a lone commander, faced a conundrum with the Martinez family's latest bomb detection

technology gathering dust, unfiled. With no recourse, he reached out to headquarters.

Rivenwood and Sea City were caught in the whirlwind of this operation, and before long, the detectors found their way to Noah's domain.

"Master, I'm in a bind here," Micah pleaded over the phone, "Vance is still being grilled by the brass, and if these detectors aren't dispatched pronto, we'll be in a whole new world of hurt."

Noah's chuckle was warm. "You two are still at it after all these years. Worry not, I'll make sure Rivenwood gets its gear."

"Cheers. Next time I'm in Sea City, drinks are on me."

The call ended, and Micah's smile froze mid-curve.

"Master, when we next meet, I hope we can still share a drink."

Noah, eyeing the stack of detectors, surreptitiously amended the count from three hundred to two hundred, signing off with a flourish.

Meanwhile, Quincy received a cryptic buzz from F-Poison to rendezvous in Sea City for a new arms consignment destined for a clandestine weapons lab.

Three days later, Vance returned from Sea City, his phone ringing the moment he touched down.

"Vance, I hear you've been digging through the archives, dusting off an old human trafficking case,"

Noah's voice came through clearly.

Vance replied with a grin, "Indeed, Master. I wanted to show the rookies how we uncovered GTO's trail

and share some of your legendary tales so they know the giant they stand on."

"At my age, I've no need for flattery. What's got you so nostalgic?" Noah inquired.

Vance chuckled. "Had a spat with Micah, got me thinking. Found a photo, too. Hard to believe it's still

around after all these years."

A pause hung in the air. "What photo?"

"The one with you and the twelve kids. I'm thinking of tracking them down, see if they remember

anything."

"Where's the photo?" Noah's tone grew somber.

He remembered that photo well, the one he thought he'd destroyed. How could it still exist?

Vance tightened his grip on the phone as he kept his voice calm. "With me, Master. Everything alright?"

Noah feigned ease. "Odd, I thought that photo was lost in the archive fire."

“Oh, about that. I wanted to find out more, so I contacted the security guard back then. He said when you were taking the photo, he was astonished by your heroic aura and took one, too. Frankly, I’m quite surprised your wife’s in there too. Should I send it to you?”

“Okay, send it over.” Noah hung up the call anxiously.

Soon after, Vance forwarded the photo with a message attached: [I've got people reaching out to the survivors. Join me at the agency's reunion in two days?]

Noah stared at the screen, the past staring back at him.

He had to think fast. If details emerged, if those children, now adults, remembered anything, the ten becoming to twelve would be exposed.

It was now too late to kill all ten of them. It was way too suspicious to kill everyone related to that accident.

At this time, he took out a phone he had barely ever used except to contact F-Poison and called her.

F-Poison's gruff voice broke through on a secure line, "What's wrong?"

Noah laid it all out. "I need to go back to the organization, Boss. Something's off."

F-Poison chastised him, "You should've killed them all long ago. Now you're panicking?"

"I had no choice then, but things are heating up. Vance is onto something. I'm not of much use in

Vanguard Agency now anyway, so just let me leave the agency."

A moment of silence, then, F-Poison said, "Fine. We'll meet at dawn at the old spot."

Hanging up the phone, a glint of lethal intent flashed in F-Poison's eyes.

There was only one number saved. She dialed it.

"Hey, it's me."

On the day Vance hosted the so-called "Reunion," no one could get in touch with the distant hero and mentor, Noah.

At that moment, Noah, with all his savings, dressed in casual clothes, drove to the seaside.

This was the spot where Karen had once brought Percival, Leopold, and others for a camping trip.

It was also here that Noah had celebrated with Karen, Micah, Vance, and others as they joined the ranks of the Vanguard Agency.

It was here that Noah told his protégés, "The Vanguard Agency is like the sea: beneath its calm

surface, there are hidden dangers. One misstep and you could be swallowed whole." New chapter

available on Dramanovels.com

That saying, like this place, was passed down through generations.

Now, standing here once more, Noah could only scoff at the irony.

Who would have guessed that he would become the hidden danger beneath the seemingly tranquil sea?

"Rover."

Hearing someone call his code name, Noah turned around and was surprised to see a teenage girl.

His eyes sharpened as he recognized her, "You must be Quincy. Boss mentioned you."

Chapter 615

Noah joined the ranks of RST at seventeen, but by nineteen, the organization had splintered into GTO and CK after Jasper's devastating raid.

Assigned by F-Poison to infiltrate the Vanguard Agency as a mole at twenty, Noah figured he would bide his time, draw Vanguard's attention with GTO activities, and then slip back into the shadows of his true allegiance. But what he thought would be a brief chapter turned into nearly six decades—a lifetime invested and now, seemingly, lost.

"Tell me, Noah, in all the years you've been undercover in Vanguard Agency, what's GTO given you for

your troubles? I'm genuinely curious. Heck, I haven't even caught a glimpse of the big boss's face.

Have you?" Quincy asked with a cocked eyebrow.

Noah's frown was subtle but present. "You talk too much. When's my ride getting here?"

Quincy stepped back, a hint of apology in her voice. "Sorry, Noah, your ship isn't coming."

Noah turned, startled, only to be greeted by the dark mouth of a gun barrel.

"Master, there's no escape now," Vance said solemnly, gun in hand, a trace of sorrow in his eyes.

Instinctively, Noah stepped back, but another gun pressed against the back of his head.

"You know I don't move so fast anymore, Master," a familiar voice stated from behind him.

Noah exhaled heavily. "Let me guess, there's one more?"

As if on cue, Karen stepped out from Noah's side, her gun aimed at the man she once revered like a father.

"It's been a long time, Master."

Noah's gaze met Karen's. Her face, one he had not seen for years, suddenly before him, gave him a moment of stunned pause.

“All these years, and you haven’t changed a bit, my little apprentice,” he reminisced. “Back then, you and Daphne were the only girls among a sea of rowdy boys. Those were the days...”

A cold voice interrupted from behind. “My mother couldn’t make it. I’m here in her stead,” Anna said, her tone as icy as her words.

Noah scanned his surroundings before settling his gaze back on Karen. “Anything else you want to ask, Karen? I’ll tell you whatever you need to know.”

Karen's grip on her gun tightened, her breath catching.

“Master, when you killed Daphne with your own hands, did you ever think of the bond we once shared?”

After a brief pause, Noah chuckled darkly.

“Listen up. I never truly considered any of you my own. You were merely stepping stones on my path to greatness.”

A tear glimmered in Micah’s eye as he observed Noah's profile. Even after all these years, he had clung to the hope that his master was not a traitor. Noah had carried him from the crossfire when he was wounded on the battlefield. He had been there for every pivotal moment of Micah's life within the

Vanguard Agency.

When Karen was thought dead, it was Micah who first sought out Noah, sharing his suspicions of a mole within the Agency.

It was no wonder that his investigation had met a dead end for so many years, at most reaching the Deputy Director of the Rivenwood headquarters.

He had never suspected Noah. Everyone else, but not him.

Disbelief etched Vance's features. An orphan with no friends, his aloof nature meant he would do almost anything to achieve his goals, even if it meant hurting those around him. Noah had been the first to show him what care felt like.

When "Destruction Plan" failed, he had his doubts about Noah. However, that was soon dismissed after investigations. In fact, he even regretted ever doubting Noah.

Now, that doubt seemed to be the very reason for Noah's manipulation of him.

Amid the sea breeze that ruffled their clothes, Karen felt no chill.

No one knew how much Noah meant to her. She respected Yorick, found a kindred spirit in Ulysses,

but to Noah, she had given the regard one would have for a father.

After being drugged by her foster family and waking up in a stranger's bed, it was Noah who helped her out of that darkness, giving her the strength of a father's support, enabling her to start anew.

Now, here he was, spewing such betrayal.

Accepting his fate, Noah sat down, checking his watch.

"So you lured me here to flush out F-Poison? Sorry to disappoint, but even if you've turned this young lady against me, she knows nothing of F-Poison's whereabouts."

Karen smirked. "Master, you taught us to hit the enemy where they least expect it."

Frowning, Noah listened as Vance added, "The photo I sent you carried a tracking virus. Once you opened it, your phone was compromised. Every device near you now pings back to Karen's computer, all your calls, all your codes."

Mused, Noah chuckled. "Ah, as expected of my apprentices. And Micah, what role did you play in this little game?"

Micah locked eyes with Noah. "The Martinez family's detectors that you've been waiting on? They have trackers in them. Thomas is already leading raids on GTO's hideouts across the cities. You're out of

options.”

“Master, there's no need for stalling. No one is coming for you,” Karen said firmly, her gun steady. “The bomb on your belt is already disabled.”

Noah's shock was brief before he pressed a button on his ring—supposedly the trigger for his last resort.

He had planned to take his apprentices with him out of this world. But it seemed he had miscalculated again.

And then, he collapsed heavily to the ground.

Karen and the others rushed to check on him. Read at Drqmanovels.com

Noah was dead.

But it was not poison that killed him. In an instant, something had shattered all his nerves inside.

"Quincy!" Anna called out.

They saw Quincy, too, on one knee, black blood oozing from every orifice, a mirror image of Noah's condition.

Karen hurried over to check Quincy's vitals, blocking her nerves to prevent further damage.

Quincy was young, and she had some medical knowledge. Although the situation was dire, it was not life-threatening.

Karen quickly instructed Anna to get Quincy to the nearest hospital.

Chapter 616

Vance and Micah had turned the place upside down but found no trace of anyone.

Noah had dropped dead as if life had abruptly come to an end.

"Karen, have you ever seen anything like this?" Vance inquired.

Karen shook her head. "It's not poison, not a concealed weapon, not a heart attack... I've never heard of such a death!"

"What in the world is going on?" Micah was equally baffled.

Just then, Karen received a call from Vivienne.

"Mom, F-Poison escaped!"

An hour earlier, Vivienne had led a team from the Nine Mystics Society to F-Poison's hideout, sprinkling the area with a potent toxin to make sure not even a fly could escape.

But when they surrounded F-Poison's lair, they found it empty.

Aside from a collection of masks and a variety of clothing and bags, there was no clue about F-

Poison's whereabouts.

Unlike before, F-Poison had left in such a hurry that she had not even had time to cover her tracks properly.

It was like when Vivienne had tracked down a new bomb prototype, and GTO had hurriedly left a model behind.

Vivienne took a deep breath. "Someone tipped her off!"

...

At the border town between Sea City and Rivenwood, F-Poison, dressed in a pure white dress and wearing Gillian's face with delicate makeup, strolled along a flowery path.

A man in a sleek suit followed her, his expression solemn.

"Thanks for saving me this time," F-Poison said, turning around with a bright smile, like a girl in love, innocent and endearing.

The man remained unmoved, his eyes even flashing with disdain.

"You were foolish!"

F-Poison did not panic in the face of the man's anger. She casually picked a flower, sniffed it, and then

tucked it into her hair. "Don't worry, Noah won't spill anything. If I want them dead, they won't live.

Otherwise, why do you think I'd let them operate alone? By the way, I owe it all to you, or I wouldn't

have been able to develop such an effective thing."

"This is our family's secret technique. If you're interested, after you develop what I want, I might let you

have a taste."

F-Poison waved her hand dismissively. "No thanks, I'm not interested in your ancient warrior lineage

stuff."

Changing the subject, F-Poison asked, "Does this flower look good on me?"

The man halted, seemingly irritated with F-Poison's girlish antics.

"Be careful from now on. I won't be in touch with you for a long time."

With that, he turned and walked away, his retreating figure casting a dark shadow.

F-Poison pouted, took the flower from her hair, crushed it in her hand, and muttered, "Other than being

so unromantic, he's much better compared to others. After all, he understands me more than anyone.

It's a pity; it will be a long time before I see him again."

She threw the crushed flower on the ground and stamped it into the dirt.

After F-Poison's disappearance, the Vanguard Agency underwent a massive shake-up.

No one could have predicted that Noah, long revered as a hero of the Vanguard Agency, was actually a mole for GTO!

This revelation sent shock waves through the upper ranks of the Vanguard Agency and the ancient warrior lineage, leading to a thorough purge.

Those who had been close to Noah were scrutinized one by one to ensure they had no ties to GTO before being released.

Vance and Micah were among the first to be investigated, even though they had personally apprehended Noah. After all, they were his closest protégés, and they might be sacrificing their mentor to save themselves.

The interrogation process at the Vanguard Agency was rigorous and meticulous. Even the youngest and strongest agents would be worn down to the bone.

After ten grueling days of questioning, Vance and Micah were finally released, looking gaunt as if they had aged years.

Thomas, Leopold, Soren, and others were waiting outside. Seeing Micah emerge, they all rushed over.

"Deputy Director, are you alright?"

"How could I be alright? They've tormented me to the brink!"

"Let's get you home; the car's been warmed up."

They helped Micah into the car, but no one seemed to notice Vance trailing behind.

Vance did not expect much sympathy from the young agents; after all, he had never shown them much kindness.

He sighed and shuffled forward, his own car waiting.

Beep beep!

Vance paused and looked back, surprised to see Darren Edwards!

"Dad!" Darren rushed over, "I've come to take you home. Mom's waiting."

Vance had not expected his son to show up and asked in astonishment, "Who told you I was here?"

Vance chuckled, knowing Vivienne was not the sentimental type; she must have had a reason for

sending Darren.

Sure enough, as Darren started the car, Melissa called.

"Darren, did you pick up your dad? Drive over to the Perez Mansion; your Auntie Karen has returned."

Melissa's voice was a mix of excitement and nostalgia, with a hint of a sob.

Darren nodded and drove to the Perez Mansion.

Vance, now changed and refreshed, stepped out of the car with Darren to be greeted warmly.

The courtyard of the Perez Mansion was bustling with people as Karen and Vivienne stood by Jasper's

side. Melissa was just a step away, her eyes tinged with red.

The Brooks and the Edwards families were in the dark about Vance's true identity. He had spent his

days tending to business at the Edwards Group and his evenings at Vanguard Agency under the guise

of social engagements. Content of Dramanovels.com

So, as far as Melissa knew, Karen and Vance had never met before.

"President Vance, it's a pleasure to finally see the man behind the myth," Karen said, extending her

hand. To an outsider, it was as if they were meeting for the first time.

Vance firmly shook her hand. "Pleased to meet you, Karen. I've heard a lot about you from Melissa.

Welcome back."

His 'welcome back' carried a double meaning.

Karen chuckled inwardly, acknowledging the old rival's courtesy.

Despite the years, Karen still found herself at odds with some of Vance's methods, but they remained

comrades-in-arms.

That much was unchangeable.

"Karen, seeing you again means so much to me... There's been so much happening at home, and I

didn't know who to talk to. But now, it's like a weight has lifted, knowing you've returned."

Chapter 617

Melissa was a wreck for a whole week when she heard the news of Karen's passing. Even now, just

the thought of it could bring tears to her eyes.

Karen reached out and wiped the tear from Melissa's eye. "Come on, even your kids all grown up now.

You shouldn't be crying like when you were a little girl."

Vivienne handed her a tissue. "Here, wipe your tears."

Melissa looked up at Vivienne and then at Karen. "Auntie Karen, Vivienne's had a tough time with the

Brooks family. Now that you and Jasper are here, I want to apologize on behalf of the Brooks to both you and Vivienne."

With that, Melissa bent forward in a deep bow.

Vivienne lifted her back up. "Auntie, you're making us feel like strangers."

"That's right, if you keep this up, I'll get cross," Karen said, patting Melissa's back. "Isn't it great that we're all here together now?"

Melissa nodded vigorously. "Yeah, you're right. It's nice, just like this."

Vance watched from the side, well aware of the hardships Karen and Vivienne had endured over the years because of Scott and his organization. He knew that a mere apology or bow could not make up for it all.

But none of that mattered when it came to his beloved.

He put a comforting arm around Melissa's shoulders, saying, "Melissa, we've finally got a chance to catch up with Karen. Let's not dwell on the unhappy stuff. How about we talk about something cheerful?"

"Sure, Karen, let's go chat over there." Melissa affectionately linked arms with Karen, and they made their way over to where Zelda was.

Vance, Vivienne, and the ever-silent Jasper went to Jasper's study in unspoken agreement.

Vance was aware that Vivienne's invitation to join the Perez gathering was not just for pleasantries.

Inside the study, Percival was already there, serving coffee like a perfect gentleman.

Vance was surprised; he had not expected Percival to be at the Perez Mansion and was even more taken aback to see him waiting in the study.

"Vance, you've been put through the wringer this time," Jasper said as soon as they entered the study.

Vance modestly replied, "Jasper, you flatter me. I had no idea Lark was your daughter—no wonder she's so impressive."

Jasper chuckled. "Let's skip the formalities. I've heard from Percival that you're quite interested in the ancient warrior lineage."

Vance glanced at Percival, who was busy pouring coffee for Vivienne and not looking his way.

His brow furrowed imperceptibly, then smoothed again, "Yes, Jasper, you might know that my family, the Edwards, are connected by marriage to the ancient warrior lineage. After the Sheldon family met

their demise, we took possession of the Mystic Vein. But since then, peace has eluded our family."

Jasper's laugh was knowing. He was well aware of the situation.

After the fall of the Sheldon family, the Perez family had considered keeping the Mystic Vein until they

could return it to Ulysses Sheldon. But they were too late, and the Edwards got to it first.

Over the years, the Perez family had kept a watchful eye on the Edwards, and when the head of the

Edwards family and Vance's parents died under mysterious circumstances, it was hard for them not to

feel a sense of relief.

Hoarding another family's legacy, resulting in their complete downfall, and then suffering such karma—

how could that not be satisfying?

Jasper was no saint and felt no remorse.

What he had not expected was for Vance to be part of the Vanguard Agency and to have risen so

rapidly to a position of power.

Initially, Jasper wondered why Vance had climbed the ranks so quickly, only to realize he wanted to

confront the ancient warrior lineage.

"Did it never occur to you that the misfortunes of the Edwards family could be the result of your own making?" Jasper asked.

Clarity flashed in Vance's eyes, "Are you suggesting that you know about my grandfather's and my parents' sudden deaths—that they were due to the Sheldon family's curse? What exactly is in that Mystic Vein!"

Vance's tone was charged with emotion, and his hands balled into fists.

Vivienne tapped the tabletop. "Vance, don't get worked up. Whatever has befallen the Edwards has nothing to do with the Sheldon family. On the contrary, you might want to consider whether the fault lies

with your own family."

Vance's brow furrowed with frustration. "What do you mean by that?"

Percival pulled out a contract from his briefcase, a document between the Edwards Group and a pharmaceutical company.

"What's this, Mr. Percy? Are you trying to meddle with whom the Edwards Group partners with now?"

Vance scoffed.

Every mention of the ancient warrior lineage and the Sheldons stirred Vance's emotions.

Percival flipped to the signature page of the contract, pointing to the name of the other party. "Don't you

want to see the name of this company's chairman?"

Vance was momentarily taken aback, then looked closely—the chairman was none other than

Vivienne!

Vivienne cradled a steaming mug of coffee in her hands, took a sip, and said with a smirk, "You really

didn't know? When the company went through the whole rebranding shindig and changed the CEO's

name, we penned a new deal with your firm."

After all, what the Edwards Group craved were the cutting-edge gas masks that the pharmaceutical

company supplied – the only way to halt the sacrifice of their workers and safeguard the sterling

reputation of the Edwards Group.

Vance was not a man to be taken for a fool. His mind was sharp as a tack. "Who was this previous

CEO?"

"My mentor, Ulysses." Vivienne crossed her arms and leveled her gaze at Vance.

Vance was gobsmacked. Ulysses, the very man he had been doggedly searching for, had been right under his nose the entire time!

Vance's expression was beyond shock.

It was foolish! Content belongs to Dramanovels.com

Had the patriarch of the Edwards family taken the matter seriously, he would not have been caught off guard by a sudden demise, leaving no time to set his affairs in order.

Vance's parents would not have had to endure the same tragedy!

And for all these years, Vance's resentment should have been pointed at his grandfather's foolishness!

He was struggling to come to terms with it all.

He could not fathom why his grandfather had discarded the formula. Was it really just because of the cost? Did he not consider his own health?

But now, no one could provide Vance with answers.

Vance picked up the contract, his mind racing. "So, the reason this company approached the Edwards Group was not for money. It was to save the lives of the workers."

Chapter 618

Vivienne mulled it over for a second, then said, "Well, it's not exactly like that. My mentor was the kind

who'd perk up at the sight of a dollar bill, and now, I'm all about the cash, too. So, I need you to ink a new deal, Vance. You know my Mr. Wolf's unemployed at the moment, and I've got a household to run."

With that, she whipped out a fresh contract and laid it before Vance, the figures in it a whopping fifty percent higher than the previous one.

Without a moment's hesitation, Vance scribbled his signature on the dotted line.

Money was no object when it came to this lifesaving contract.

After closing the contract, Vance's expression regained its composure. "So, is this the reason Jasper called me over today?"

Jasper shook his head. "Of course not. This is a matter my granddaughter brought to you. As for me, I've got another issue to discuss."

Vance straightened up. "What's on your mind?"

"The ancient warrior lineage."

Vance's eyes flickered with disbelief.

Jasper himself hailed from the ancient warrior lineage, and the Perez family held a lofty position within

the Vanguard Agency. It was surprising he would broach the topic with Vance, knowing full well that

Vance had always wanted to kick the ancient warrior lineage out of the Agency.

"Surprised, huh?" Jasper chuckled. "I know you've got a bone to pick with the ancient warrior lineage,

feeling that us old-timers are flexing our family muscles, stifling your special squad's operations, and

botching many a mission."

Vance frowned, his gaze drifting over to Percival and Vivienne.

Great, those two were at it again, playing house.

One sipping coffee, the other pouring – living the life of Riley.

Vance had to drag his attention back. "Jasper, just lay your cards on the table."

At that moment, Percival handed Vance a freshly brewed cup of coffee. "Vance, Jasper here wants a

slice of our partnership pie. What do you say?"

Vance pressed his lips. "Jasper, the deal with Mr. Percy is to boot the ancient warrior lineage out of the

Vanguard Agency. What exactly is the 'pie' you're wanting a piece of?"

Jasper stood and strolled over to his desk, speaking slowly. "I get why you want to push them out. Over

time, their influence has grown massive, almost monopolizing power, to the point where even the Perez

and Martinez families sometimes have to step back."

He continued, knowing Vance's motives were not merely vengeful. "You want to restore peace to the Agency."

Vance watched Jasper quietly, unsure where he was headed with this.

"But, after what happened with Noah, did anything strike you as off?"

"What could be off? GTO managed to hide a mole in the Vanguard Agency for nearly sixty years, that..." Vance stopped short, suddenly grasping Jasper's point.

Indeed, how did Noah manage to stay under the radar in the Agency for six decades without anyone catching on? Like those ten children back in the day – he added two more, and nobody noticed?

What about the others on that mission?

Could they not tell the difference between ten or twelve kids?

No one in the Vanguard Agency was a fool. Without inside help, even with GTO cutting off its own tentacles to let Noah gain merit, his stay would not have been so smooth.

So smooth that even Yorick never suspected his partner of anything!

And then there was Noah, pushing for the ancient warrior lineage to seize power all these years without any of their kin by his side. Why the obsession?

It dawned on Vance.

The ancient warrior lineages must have been pulling strings behind the scenes!

If Noah was GTO's mole, could it mean that someone within the lineage had tight ties with GTO?

The thought was chilling, and Vance could not help but break out in a cold sweat.

Vivienne poured Vance another cup of coffee. "My mentor faked his own death because he was being hunted, and those hunters were from the ancient warrior lineages. There's likely a significant connection there."

Vance's voice lowered. "You're right. When I first tried to locate the Emerald Monastery, I sensed someone was after me, too. We never identified who, but they were highly skilled."

Vance had suspected for years that Ulysses had not perished when his family was wiped out but had gone into hiding.

So, Vance had been investigating discreetly, using his position within the Vanguard Agency to his advantage.

Vance could never have predicted that when he finally tracked down the location of the Emerald

Monastery, he would discover that someone was after Finnian's life. Knowing he was no match for

these mysterious assailants with his current abilities, he had no choice but to lay low.

To his dismay, by the time he returned, Finnian had succumbed to illness, leaving behind nothing but a grave.

And from then on, no word came from Finnian again.

Reflecting on the past, Vance now understood that the demise of the Sheldon family was inextricably linked to the ancient warrior lineage.

Even he had sensed that Ulysses was not truly dead; surely those of the ancient lineage were even more aware.

The pursuers had to be from the ancient warrior lineage!

And if they were all from the ancient warrior lineage, then the mysterious people aiding Noah might well

be the same group of people who hunted Finnian.

"What do you want me to do?" Vance asked.

Vance pursed his lips, carefully weighing Percival's words.

Moreover, with just himself and Percival, there was no chance of infiltrating the inner circles of the lineage. Read at Dramanovels.com

But with the help of the Perez family, there might be a glimmer of hope.

If they could excise the cancer, perhaps the Vanguard Agency would no longer be under the lineage's thumb.

After all, the Agency's greatest enemy was still the elusive F-Poison!

"Alright, I'm in," Vance stood resolutely. "Jasper, Mr. Percy, I have but one goal—to turn the Vanguard Agency into a true protector of the people!"

Percival rose to his feet, his coffee steaming in hand.

Jasper joined them, lifting his cup.

The three men clinked their cups in the air, a pact sealed over a coffee that stood in for whiskey.

Vivienne watched this unfold, a slight smile gracing her lips.

Chapter 619

Outside the quaint suburban house, Natalia and Yasmine tapped softly on the door before poking their

heads inside.

"Grandpa, Uncle Luke, and Uncle Fredrick are here, and they're in the backyard bawling their eyes out."

"They're wailing so pitifully. I swear Auntie Karen's about to be hugged to death! Oh, and they keep asking for Vivienne."

Vivienne rubbed her neck, contemplating how overwhelming family affection could sometimes feel like asphyxiation!

As they stepped out of the study, they were greeted by a chorus of sobs that could rival any opera.

Through his tears, Luke cried, "Oh, Sasha, my little Sasha, look how you've grown! I've been waiting for you to come home!"

Fredrick joined in, his voice choked with emotion, "Sasha, oh Sasha! I can finally lay eyes on you again. You have no idea how much I've missed you! You were so small when you left, and I haven't slept well since!"

Karen had one brother clinging to each arm, her face a mask of resignation as she glanced helplessly at Maddox and Yuri.

"Guys, a little help here?"

Maddox feigned ignorance. "I don't see anything!"

Yuri chimed in, "Hang in there, Sasha. I'm powerless here!"

"Luke, Fredrick, I get it, you're emotional. But we've got guests. Maybe stand up for now?" Karen

suggested, patting their shoulders.

Luke and Fredrick shook their heads in unison. "No way. It's been years since I've seen my little sis. I

can't just walk away."

"Exactly, let me have a good look at you. You're finally back."

Karen was torn between exasperation and amusement, then reassured them, "I'm not going anywhere

again, guys. You can see me whenever you want from now on!"

Luke's wife, Carmen Pendleton, finally intervened, "Luke, enough is enough, move it!"

Fredrick's wife, Alice Churchill, though gentle, had a firmness to her words. "Fredrick, come on, get up,

will you? If you don't, I might just twist your arm off."

Reluctantly, the brothers cleared the way, leaving room for their spouses to approach Karen.

It was then that Vivienne realized her uncles were identical twins, hence the striking resemblance and similar temperaments.

Maddox and Yuri could not contain their laughter, imitating their sisters-in-law, which earned them a glare from each brother.

Karen's gaze brightened as she looked at Carmen and Alice standing side by side, shocked by who they were.

They were not as emotional as Zelda had been but still bending in a gentle bow.

"Boss, you're finally back!"

Everyone was taken aback. What was going on here?

Luke and Fredrick exchanged puzzled looks, clueless about the sudden shift.

In a whisper, Jasper asked Vivienne, "Are your aunts, like, your mom's followers?"

Vivienne nodded. "Sort of. You know, your daughter's incredible, so it's not weird for her to have a bunch of followers and stuff."

Vance shot Karen a deep look before turning his gaze to Vivienne. What sort of enigmas were this mother and daughter? One commanded the Nine Mystics Society, while the other had the ladies of the

Pendleton and Churchill families calling her boss.

Helping her sisters-in-law to their feet, Karen said, "You can't call me boss anymore. I should be calling you my sisters-in-law now."

Carmen, her eyes misting, shook her head, "No, you'll always be our boss."

Alice agreed, "That's right. That's not going to change!"

Carmen was William Pendleton's sister, and Alice was Zachary Churchill's sister. The Pendleton and Churchill families had nearly gone bankrupt. If it were not for Karen's secret support, their current status in high society would not have been possible, let alone their very survival.

Back then, Carmen and Alice had suffered much, protected by Karen from the shadows.

Some bonds seem destined from the start.

Karen had never anticipated that helping the Churchill and Pendleton families would result in gaining two sisters-in-law or that her daughter would become deeply connected with both families.

Just then, William and Zachary entered, followed by Faye Churchill. Faye was there not for Karen but for Vivienne.

"Vivienne!" Faye ran towards her with much more composure than Charlotte Redwood, avoiding the mishap of knocking her over.

Because of Faye's greeting, Luke and Fredrick finally noticed their niece, whom they had never met.

They rushed over, exclaiming, "Vivienne, let us have a good look at you!"

Vivienne instinctively wanted to flee from their overbearing warmth.

Vivienne could not help but laugh, half-hiding behind Jasper, "Hello, Uncle Luke, Uncle Fredrick."

"Ah, there you go! A true beauty, just like me!" One boasted.

"Luke, you must be blind! She clearly takes after me more. People always said Sasha and I looked like twins. Vivienne is the spitting image of me!"

Vivienne thought to herself, "But aren't you two twins? Why the competition?"

As the uncles bickered, Maddox and Yuri joined the fray, each claiming they resembled Vivienne the most.

In the end, it was Maddox who turned the tide and clinched the victory!

"Your kids are the ones who look like you the most, so Vivienne looks most like me! I don't have kids!"

The other three were at a loss for words, as it seemed there was no arguing with that logic. New

chapter available on Dramanovels.com

Yuri nodded in agreement, "Yeah, we've got the whole warm and cozy home life while you've got a table for one."

Luke, ever the earnest one, expressed his concern, "Buddy, when are you going to make Willa your wife?"

Maddox felt something crack inside him, shattering into pieces that seemed to blow away with the slightest breeze...

"All right, you guys, freeze! We're settling this today. I'm taking all three of you on alone!"

The trio perked up at the challenge, practically dragging Maddox to the backyard.

Percival chuckled, imagining if they were his boys, "A punch for each one of my dear sons, just to show them who's boss."

Chapter 620

While the uncles settled their friendly wagers, the aunties had already encircled Vivienne in lively conversation.

"Sweetie, I heard you were back in town and didn't have time to rustle up anything fancy. So, I've got

these few properties for you. Prime real estate, all of them. Should you not fancy any, we'll shop around for others."

How could they be anything but prime? Situated in the heart of major cities, Vivienne would never lack a place to call home wherever she went!

"Darling, since she has gifted you homes, how about I throw in some wheels? I heard you have a taste for motorcycles, sports cars, and off-roaders. They're all parked in the garage for you, ready to be picked up. If they don't suit your fancy, we'll get you something else."

Each vehicle was a limited edition, the kind Vivienne had only seen in Percival's private collection.

"And Vivienne, I still love getting you dresses. I've bought heaps, complete with matching jewelry, all tucked away in those closets. Just a start, we'll hit the shops for more!"

Just a start? Zelda's dress collection for Vivienne was so extensive she could change every hour and not run out of options!

Karen chuckled and handed Vivienne a bracelet.

"Willa handcrafted this; she asked me to give it to you." Karen slipped the bracelet onto Vivienne's wrist.

Ever since Willa learned Vivienne was Karen's daughter, she had started crafting this bracelet,

meticulously carving each bead with patience uncharacteristic of her usual self.

"Thank you all, Aunties. And Mom, please extend my gratitude to Auntie Willa, too." Vivienne's heart

swelled with emotion, filling a void she did not realize she had.

From then on, she was no longer alone in this world.

She had a mother, a grandfather, loving uncles and aunties.

And, of course, her beloved Mr. Wolf!

Vivienne's gaze met Percival's, her eyes brimming with joy.

From their first encounter, it was her radiant eyes that had captivated him.

Now, finally, he could see the happiness shimmering in those same eyes.

A happiness he, as a lover, could never provide.

Percival was grateful to witness the most joyous moments of Vivienne's life.

Grateful that he could be there to accompany her in her happiness every single day.

"In-law!"

A voice, aged yet excited, called from beyond the door. Percival went to greet them.

It was unmistakably his grandfather!

Only a member of the Perez family could greet with such familial warmth.

"Grandpa." Percival helped Richard inside, followed by the heavily laden Nathan Ellington and Cecilia Boyd.

Cecilia instantly recognized Karen as Vivienne's mother. She approached, gripping Karen's hands with fervor, "I'm Percival's mother. It's finally a pleasure to meet you. Thank you for raising such a wonderful daughter."

Karen was already acquainted with Cecilia, having met her while mentoring Percival, although Cecilia was none the wiser.

"Thank you as well for looking after Vivienne when I couldn't. You've been a blessing," Karen responded warmly.

Cecilia, still holding Karen's hands, added, "We have others eager to meet you, but they're a bit shy about coming in."

Karen knew it must be the Hawthorn family.

"Vivienne, would you bring your father and mother in?"

With a nod, Vivienne stepped outside. Dorian and Cordelia, moved by Karen's invitation, felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude.

Entering the room, Dorian and Cordelia were flooded with emotion upon seeing Karen after so many years.

To Dorian, Karen was more than a savior; she was a cherished friend, their bond beyond the confines of romance.

"Dorian, Cordelia, it's been too long." Karen opened her arms and embraced them warmly.

Cordelia met Karen for the first time, yet they connected as if they were long-lost companions.

"It's been too long indeed."

With tears in their eyes and hearts full of words, both Dorian and Cordelia found themselves speechless at the moment.

The reunion was bustling with joy, and even guests like Melissa and Vance felt right at home.

Everyone there was family.

But to Vivienne's surprise, she and Percival became the unintended stars of the event.

Jasper and Richard sat with stern faces, scrutinizing Vivienne and Percival.

Vivienne hesitated with her strawberry cheesecake, unsure whether to eat or not under the intense gazes of the two patriarchs.

Percival, shielding her slightly, spoke up, "Grandpa Jasper and Richard, whatever you want to say, just say it. Don't stare at Vivienne like that. She's timid."

The Nine Mystics Society members were taken aback: It's news to us that our young master is timid.

What a revelation!

Jasper chimed in, "What's going on, Percival? Our granddaughter isn't good enough for you? Is that why you're dragging your feet on making it official?"

"Not at all. The moment Vivienne agrees, we'll go get that marriage license," Percival declared, gripping Vivienne's hand with unwavering certainty.

He was probably the most eager man in the world to get hitched!

Finally, both Jasper and Richard cracked a smile. "Well, Vivienne, what do you think?"

Vivienne took her time savoring the last bite of her strawberry cheesecake before answering slowly,

"I'm not in a rush." Updated at Dramanovels.com

Richard, concerned, leaned in. "Vivienne, is it because that rascal Percival isn't treating you right?

Don't worry, I'll set him straight!"

Jasper did not think Percival was the issue. He had seen with his own eyes how well Percival had treated Vivienne over the past year.

"Yeah, Vivienne, why don't you want to get married? You guys have been together for a good three years now."

Elders always hope to see their kin settled down sooner rather than later; it gives them peace of mind.

She looked deeply into Percival's eyes, her own bright with love, reflecting the face of the man she adored.

Percival's eyes crinkled with a smile. He had never imagined that it would be in such a setting that he would hear Vivienne speak words that would etch themselves into his memory.