

## Million-Dollar 681

### Chapter 681

Hector took a deep breath and kept his voice steady. "Let's not jump to conclusions before we get to the bottom of this, Dracon. What's the word from the doctors?"

Dracon pinched the bridge of his nose, the worry lines on his forehead deepening. "They're playing it by ear with the treatment. No idea when Dad might come out of it. The house is in chaos, and I'm at a loss here."

"You've always been the one steering the ship at home. I'll hold down the fort here at the hospital; you head back and sort things out. Keep Dad's condition under wraps, okay? We don't want to spook the shareholders or the folks at Vanguard Agency. And get a couple more guys to watch over this place. I've got a bad feeling there might be more trouble brewing."

Hector orchestrated the plans with the finesse of an elder brother despite the fact that he wasn't.

Dracon nodded, silently taking in Hector's instructions before heading out to do as he said.

Micah, who had been listening in, couldn't help but vent to Vance, "Compared to Hector, Dracon's a piece of trash." Vance shot Micah a look that could quell any further comments. "You always this chatty?"

Micah choked on his words. No matter how long they had worked together, he and Vance just didn't click.

After Dracon had left, Hector came over to introduce himself. "Vance, Micah, right? I'm Hector."

"Mr. Linklater, it's an honor," Vance replied, shaking Hector's hand firmly.

"Vanguard Agency will leave no stone unturned in investigating what happened to Yorick. There will be no cover-ups, rest assured."

Hector adjusted his glasses, a smile devoid of warmth tugging at his lips. "Vance, don't just fixate on Percival as the prime suspect. He has no motive to harm my father. I've heard of his reputation; my father has praised him. I suspect there's more to this story. If you need my help, just say the word."

Vance felt a glimmer of relief upon hearing this. Finally, someone talking sense.

"We'll take your suggestion to heart, Mr. Linklater. We've got business back at the agency, so we'll be off. If there's any news about Yorick, please keep us informed."

After exchanging goodbyes, Vance and Micah made to leave.

But Hector stopped Micah. "Micah, do you happen to know where Karen is?"

Micah was taken aback, eyeing Hector as if he were up to no good. "What do you want with our boss?"

Even Vance was surprised. How did Hector know Karen?

Hector's laugh was light. "My father has mentioned her before. I was hoping to meet her."

"She's not available right now," Micah replied, his gaze narrowing imperceptibly.

Something about Hector didn't sit right with him.

Hector nodded slightly. "Understood. Thank you, anyhow."

Without further ado, Micah left, leaning on his cane.

Once outside, Vance couldn't hold back his curiosity, "Is Lark acquainted with Hector? Were they..."

Micah cut him off with irritation. "What's with the questions?"

Vance fell silent, awkwardly closing his mouth.

Thomas, who had been driving in silence, didn't chime in. The two directors bickered like this all the time, nothing new there. Meanwhile, Thomas sent a coded message to Vivienne.

[They're in my car.]

Receiving the message, Vivienne was already on her way to the Vanguard Agency's detention center with a team in tow. The guard on duty was Caspian, who looked at Vivienne with trepidation.

"Madam, Percival's not going to suffer in there. Could you please head back for now? He'll be released once the investigation's done. Please!"

Vivienne's expression was icy as she stood her ground. "I need to see him myself."

Caspian looked like he was about to kneel and beg. "Madam, it's really not possible right now. The case Percival is involved in is big. If you barge in, it'll only get bigger!"

"I can't worry about that!" Vivienne was never impulsive, but a text message she received before Thomas's call had simply read, [Flynn.]

Just one word, sender unknown. She hadn't given it much thought initially, but when news of Percival's trouble reached her, she connected the dots.

While Percival wouldn't be mistreated in custody, Vivienne knew that if he remained locked up, chaos would ensue outside. And clearly, this was a targeted attack. Someone was using Percival to get to Flynn.

"Madam, I promise not even a hair on Percival's head will be harmed. Please, turn around!" Caspian was on the verge of tears. "Someone, help! Help me to persuade Madam!" He yelled inwardly.

But no one could help him.

Vivienne raised her hand, and numerous guns and weapons were aimed at the secret detention center holding Percival.

Even Caspian had several red dots trained on him.

"I don't want to make this difficult for you. Step aside," Vivienne said, gesturing to Caspian.

Caspian, resigned yet unable to draw his weapon, stood his ground. "Madam, I have my duty. I cannot let you pass." Vivienne nodded. "Alright, then, don't blame me for this."

As she was about to launch a tranquilizer needle, a deep and authoritative voice called out from behind.

"Vivienne!"

Everyone turned to see Jasper striding towards them.

Caspian knew Jasper well and breathed a sigh of relief. Thank goodness, maybe he could convince Vivienne to leave.

Jasper shuffled over, leaning heavily on the arms of his four strapping sons, and took up a position just behind Vivienne. His gaze was affectionate yet tinged with exasperation.

"Vivienne, how many times have I told you not to be so hotheaded? A young lady ought to have a gentle touch, don't you think?"

Just yesterday, the news that Percival had whisked Vivienne away to get married had nearly given me a heart attack. The whole

ez family had mobilized, scouring the city for the runaway couple, and they had even made a tense visit to the Ellington Mansion.

Thanks to Richard's silver tongue, Jasper had cooled his jets a bit. Then, both families miedae reachithe i ulsiygfayebiddd intending to throw them a proper celebration. But after a night of trying, they hadn't managed to connect—only to find out about this massive mess.

Upon hearing the news, Jasper couldn't be bothered by the fact that Percival had whisked away his granddaughter. He rushed over immediately.

With the marriage license signed, Percival was officially his com grandson-inslayy nde his

drand n-in-law was in trouble, there was no way Jasper could just sit back and do nothing.

Caspian and the whole crew from Vanguard Agency nodded in vigorous agreement. "Absolutely, Jasper, you couldn't be more right. Let's get Madam out of here posthaste!

That's when they heard Jasper say, "Look here, we've got the keys, so let's pack up this whole circus—mortars and all!" The operatives from Vanguard Agency nearly choked on their own tongues.

Turned out Jasper had brought the keys to help Vivienne break Percival out of jail!

## Chapter 682

Caspian spread his arms in front of him, a human barricade. "Jasper, Madam, guys, | can't just let Percival walk out of here. We need official clearance to release him. Please head back and wait for news. | swear on my life, if a single hair on Percival's head is harmed, I'll answer for it!"

Vivienne, clutching the prison access card in her hand, said with a steely tone, "Caspian, I'm only giving you this much time because of your sister. Out of my way."

"Wait!" Dracon emerged from inside the prison, his face a mask of rage as he glared at Vivienne.

"Vivienne, you think this is your playground? You can't just waltz in here whenever you please. My dad's in the ER fighting for his life, and Percival is our prime suspect. He's not going anywhere with you!"

Before Dracon could finish, a rock came hurling down, striking him squarely on the crown of his head.

Fredrick stepped forward, his voice dripping with contempt. "Who do you think you are, spouting off like that, Dracon? I'm telling you, if you don't step aside, I'll make you beg for mercy, just like old times. Believe it?"

Dracon was well aware of Fredrick's reputation and quickly retreated behind Caspian. "Fredrick, even if you and the Perez family turn this place upside down, I can't let you through. This is about my dad, and I won't let it go with Percival!"

Vivienne's expression was icy as she prepared to push forward, but Jasper pulled her back just in time.

As she frowned, a man in a suit appeared before them, bearing a strong resemblance to Dracon but with a more resolute demeanor. His skills were clearly superior; even Vivienne would have to take a few rounds to defeat him.

Maddox stepped in front of Vivienne with a sneer. "Well, well, if it isn't our esteemed diplomat. What brings you to our neck of the woods?"

Hector ignored Maddox and gave Jasper a respectful nod. "Jasper, it's been too long. I regret not visiting you sooner upon my return. Please forgive me."

"It's alright, Hector. You're here now. But tell me, do you intend to get involved in today's affair?" Jasper asked with a faint smile.

Hector shook his head. "That's not my intention. I understand Vivienne's urgency to free her fiancé, but the matter has not yet been resolved. We can't release Percival until it is, especially with my father still unconscious. I hope you can understand our position."

Vivienne's eyes narrowed subtly. This man had clearly done his homework on her. Hector then turned his gaze to Vivienne, his eyes flickering with an unreadable light. For some reason, she felt he was probing for something.

"Hector, I can't stand to see my grandson-in-law treated this way. Are you going to release him today or not?" Jasper's tone was firm.

Hector visibly didn't want to clash with the Perez family, knowing it could backfire once Yorick woke up. "If Vivienne can make my father wake up now and ask for his opinion, I'll have no objections. But until he wakes, I can't release the man."

Jasper looked at Vivienne for her decision. She smiled slightly. "Alright." She had planned to visit Yorick after freeing Percival anyway, but since Hector had put forth a condition, a trade wasn't out of the question.

The priority was to get Percival out. As Dracon opened his mouth to protest, Hector silenced him with a stern look.

"Matthew, wait here. If Yorick disagrees, we'll force our way in," Vivienne instructed before turning to her grandfather and her uncles. "Grandpa, Uncles, let's head to the hospital."

Maddox waved them off. "You go on. I'll stay here."

He knew Vivienne didn't want the Perez family too involved, but without someone from their side present, Dracon would surely mobilize the Linklater family's resources. He couldn't let his niece be at a disadvantage.

Jasper nodded in agreement and watched as Vivienne swiftly made her way to the hospital.

Behind them, Maddox chuckled. "Hector, still putting on that holier-than-thou act? Some things never change!"

On the way, Vivienne couldn't help but ask, "Grandpa, what's the deal between Maddox and Hector?"

Jasper chuckled. "Those two have been at it since they were kids, both third in line, never seeing eye to eye."

Yuri chimed in, "Hector's a lot more straight-laced than Maddox."

Fredrick laughed. "There's plenty of people more straight-laced than Maddox!"

Luke groaned. "Don't badmouth Maddox behind his back. | bet they'll end up scrapping again."

Vivienne listened with growing curiosity about Hector. She had a feeling there was more to his interest in her than met the eye. Soon enough, she arrived at the hospital and headed straight for the ICU.

Half an hour later, Hector's phone rang. He answered it with one hand. "Dad? You're awake? Great, I'll release him."

Dracon, who was behind Hector, wanted to object, but Vanguard Agency personnel were already opening the gates, escorting Percival out.

Dracon frowned inwardly—what a hassle! Percival, dressed to the nines, stepped out and was at a loss for words at the scene before him.

Maddox turned to him, his tone remarkably warmer. "Nephew-in-law, Vivienne's waiting at the hospital. Go to her, and we'll catch up later!"

What a stark contrast to the fiery temper from the day before! Percival nodded. "Alright, Uncle Maddox. I'll head there."

With that, Percival got into the car.

Through the car window, Maddox and Hector were locked in a standoff that could have been lif ed straight | f man ektniamesrs owdown.



ey were shoulder to shoulder, wrist to wrist, in a tussle that looked as though, at any moment, one might just snap the other in half.

Inside the hospital, Yorick was tethered to an oxygen machine, his voice raspy as he said, "You've gone to the trouble again, kiddo."

Vivienne was nonchalant. "No worries, but Yorick, do you have any clue what actually went down this time?"

Shaking his head, Yorick replied, "Not a Clue, but it eae nom Perciv (Have ag ah about this. Let me Sera ie investigation."

Vivienne didn't press further. If Yorick wanted to look into it himself, she wasn't going to interfere. Jasper, however, had a look that was rich with implication. "Yorick, just don't go soft."

"I'm not an idiot!" Yorick retorted, rolling his eyes at Jasper.

Soon after, a knock on the hospital room door announced Percival's arrival. Vivienne launched herself at him. "Mr. Wolf!" The three uncles present felt a twinge of heartache — our little darling!

Percival kissed Vivienne's forehead. "You've worked hard. Also, I've found Carl and the other two." Vivienne's eyes lit up. "That fast?"

"That's my turf," Percival said with a smirk, teasingly flicking Vivienne's nose. "When do we move?" "Tonight," Vivienne replied with a slight smile. After such a long wait, it was finally time to close the net! Yorick coughed a few times from his hospital bed. "That's about enough now. You kids these days..." Percival chuckled. "Yorick, feeling better?"

"I'm fine. You all go ahead and don't miss your chance," Yori k waved penal of Ff tpigBOEKAD continue his Neeaton with Jasper.

Vivienne's three uncles had made their preparations, ready to depart with her.

## Chapter 683

Night fell over the Brooks household. Kala and Darren ambled into their home, exhausted from an evening event, too tired to even think about removing their makeup. Ronald was lounging in the living room; upon seeing them, he greeted them with a grin. "You guys are back. There's some goodies in the kitchen." Kala stretched languidly, about to respond, when a knock came at the door. "Who could that be at this hour?" The door swung open to reveal a familiar figure, and Kala paused, blinking in disbelief. Rubbing her eyes and looking again, she exclaimed, "Vivienne?" She was utterly baffled! Ever since the Brooks family had been rocked by the scandal involving Scott and Judith, Vivienne had become a stranger to their home. Although Kala and Vivienne occasionally crossed paths, those instances were few and far between. Vivienne was always so busy, hardly ever seen. Kala recalled that the last time they had met was six months ago, a brief encounter en route to the office, nothing more than a hurried greeting before going separate ways. But now, an uneasy premonition nagged at her — what could Vivienne's unexpected visit signify? Since their grandmother's passing, Vivienne had moved out of the Brooks residence, and her last visit had been to confront Scott. Without any apparent reason, Vivienne's sudden arrival couldn't help but stir fears of impending bad news. Please, no more shocks — her fragile heart couldn't take it! Ronald, equally surprised by the late visit, managed to say, "Vivienne, what brings you here all of a sudden? Is there something wrong?" Vivienne looked up at him, a slight smile gracing her lips. "Am I not welcomed?" "How could you not be?" Ronald was quick to usher her inside, chuckling. "We're delighted to have you; of course, you're welcome! Please, have a seat!" Vivienne settled onto the couch, turning to Kala. "How have you been lately?" Relieved to see Vivienne's smiling face, which didn't seem to portend trouble, Kala felt a weight lift from her shoulders. She grabbed a soda from the fridge for Vivienne, saying cheerfully, "I've been great, actually. Just snagged an award for Best Actress, and in a few days, I'm off to shoot a movie directed by a renowned filmmaker. It's a script I'm really excited about." Vivienne nodded. "Sounds fantastic! Keep it up!" Kala hummed in agreement, then asked, "And you? How have things been for you? I saw on your Facebook yesterday that you and Mr. Ellington got hitched?" Kala had once harbored feelings for a man who had helped her, swearing she would marry him. But recently, she discovered that the man was none other than Percival! Far from envying Vivienne's marriage to Percival, Kala was genuinely happy for her. To Kala, the man who had helped her was no more than a shadow. Until she had learned it was Percival, she didn't even know what he looked like. Had he been single, she would have pursued him without hesitation. But now, she graciously stepped aside, wishing Percival and Vivienne nothing but happiness. "Yep." Vivienne replied with a soft smile. The trio chatted casually until Vivienne turned to Ronald, her tone shifting. "I came to tell you that Carl's been found." Kala blinked in surprise. "What happened to Carl?" Recently swamped with work, she had been out of the loop with family matters. "Really? That's wonderful!" Ronald sighed with relief. "I've been tied up with the bionic robot project and couldn't go fetch him myself. I was worried when I heard the sanatorium was torched!" Before Vivienne could reply, Ronald added, "The kid wakes up and doesn't even tell us; calls you instead." His laughter faltered as his fingers twitched on the armrest. Vivienne's eyes flickered over his hand, the smile deepening. Feeling her gaze, Ronald chuckled awkwardly. "Vivienne, why are you looking at me like that?" With a slight upturn of her lips, her voice cool and steady, Vivienne said, "I'm curious to see the expression of a man who's personally responsible for his own brother's critical injuries when he speaks of such matters." Ronald's face stiffened. "What do you mean by that?" Kala's heart skipped a beat. "Vivienne, are you suggesting Ronald hurt Carl?" Impossible. Carl was Ronald's brother! After the tragedy with their grandmother and uncle, she could understand Ronald not showing much grief — after all, their blood ties were somewhat

distant. But Carl was different; he was Ronald's biological brother. How could he do such a thing? Refusing to believe it, Kala looked at Vivienne with hopeful eyes, waiting for her to say it was just a joke. But Vivienne only glanced at her before turning her gaze back to Ronald, her voice soft but firm. "Would you like to tell them, or shall I? Shadow Hawk!" Ronald jolted. "You!" The curve of Vivienne's lips grew more pronounced. "Surprised?" Ronald's eyes, deep and probing, sought some sign of uncertainty on Vivienne's face. He found none. Throughout their exchange, Vivienne's smile remained, serene yet chilling. And in those cool eyes, a frosty edge gleamed. The better he knew her, the more Ronald understood: such smiles were harbingers of her fury.

Ronald gazed at Vivienne for a long while before slowly averting his eyes. He picked up the glass Kala had just filled for him and Jraiastit Hore Jy Sathikg the empty glass down, he looked at Vivienne again. "Yeah, it's a shocker. When did you find out? | thought | had my act down pat!" After a brief pause, he added, "Was it just because of Carl's phone call?" "When?" Vivienne leaned back on the couch, her pale, slender fingers pressing against her temples as if deep in thought.

"Maybe it was the day Scott got busted, your covert exchange in him? Or was the AEIRI died, though you pumped into her that sent her over the edge? Or even earlier?" Ronald looked at her, his face a mask of shock, while his mind was in turmoil. She had known all along.

It took him a moment to collect himself before he spoke slowly if you knew already you AnYSAML Why let me beat Carl to a pulp and have him shipped off to M State in a coma?" Vivienne's smile widened. "I thought someone as smart as you would have figured out why | haven't made my move against you yet!" Almost instantly after Vivienne's words dropped, Ronald replied, "Because of F-Poison!" Her smile grew even more radiant. "Ronald, you're truly worthy of being one of Scott's protégés, handpicked for F-Poison!"

## Chapter 684

Hearing that, Ronald chuckled—a chuckle laced with arrogance and confidence. "Protégé? He's not even in my league!" Ronald's eyes danced with mockery. Vivienne nodded in agreement. "True. Compared to you, his tactics are lacking." Ronald's brow arched, the smirk on his face growing more profound. "It seems you're quite familiar with my affairs." "Only bits and pieces." Vivienne's voice was soft, devoid of excess emotion. "A man who aims to dethrone F-Poison and become the new power behind the GTO certainly plays a different game from someone like Scott, who only knows how to obey." Since she had walked in, Vivienne had maintained a cool and aloof demeanor, leaving one to wonder what was really on her mind. "So, what brings you here today? Coming to capture me?" Ronald asked with a smile, utterly composed and not showing the slightest sign of panic. "What makes you think you can catch me? Having taken Scott's place, | won't make the same inept mistakes he did." Vivienne lifted her gaze to Ronald, her smile deepening. Then, she patted Kala on the shoulder. "Kala, we need to talk. Why don't you head upstairs?" "I..." Kala didn't want to leave. The Brooks family had seen one mishap after another, and just when things had settled, trouble found Ronald again. She didn't want to face it anymore! But judging by Vivienne's demeanor, she wouldn't leave until this issue was resolved. Kala

pressed her lips together, not uttering another word, and turned to go upstairs. Once Kala was gone, Vivienne turned back to Ronald. She took a sip of her drink and said evenly, "I'm not here to nab you." Ronald paused, then raised an eyebrow. "Not here to nab me?" He followed with a scoff. "That doesn't sound like you." Vivienne just smiled. "What do you think my style is?" "You," Ronald ventured, "would typically have the Brooks Mansion surrounded, tight as a drum, ready to catch me and force me to reveal where F-Poison is hiding." Vivienne tucked a strand of hair behind her ear and said, "And if I asked, would you tell me?" "I would!" Ronald declared without a moment's hesitation. "In fact, by now, Percival should already be leading a team to find F-Poison, right?" Vivienne raised an eyebrow. "You are definitely smarter than Scott." "I tend to agree!" Ronald boasted. Vivienne laughed lightly, leaning back on the couch, her words casual. "But sometimes, being too smart can be your downfall." Ronald's eyes narrowed slightly, but he remained silent. Vivienne also stayed quiet, her gaze lowered. Ronald could not fathom her thoughts. The room fell into an eerie silence, broken only by the wind rattling the windows from outside. Neither spoke for a long time. Finally, Vivienne spoke up, "The androids have all been destroyed, I presume. Starting tomorrow, I don't want to see another one." With that, she stood up and walked towards the door. Ronald, surprised, stood and called after her. "You're really not going to catch me?" Vivienne paused, looking back at him with icy eyes. "Ronald, being smart is good, but if you drag the entire Brooks family down as collateral for your folly, that's beyond foolish." Ronald froze. "You!" Vivienne continued coldly, "Your personal vendetta against Scott and Judith is just that—personal. Your parents, Carl, and Kala, don't share your hatred. Don't impose it on them." Ronald collapsed back onto the couch, his eyes hollow. "I knew you were clever. I thought after all this time plotting and scheming, I could grasp your thoughts, but you still saw through me." Vivienne stood in the center of the living room, just watching him coldly, wordless. Ronald looked up, a hollow laugh escaping him. "Yes, I hate Scott and Judith. One caused Lauren's grandmother's death; the other captured Lauren for GTO's virus experiments. I hate them, and I hate F-Poison even more. Lauren is dead, and I want them all to be destroyed, damned for eternity." He laughed again, his laughter tinged with madness. "That's why, the day you came for Judith, I stealthily gave her a drug that drove her mad. After her death, I buried her body on a deserted hill and hired a shaman to curse her, to whip her spirit daily." Looking up at Vivienne, he added, "You must have known I didn't have her cremated, right?" Vivienne didn't speak, nor did she deny it. After Judith's death, Scott had left the funeral arrangements to Ronald, who chose not to cremate her but to take her to a deserted hill and bind her spirit with a shaman's curse to ensure she could never find peace. Vivienne was aware of this but had chosen not to intervene.

Seeing Vivienne stay silent, Ronald continued, "As for Scott... how could I get close to the prized heir when you came for him, I gave him a little push. It worked quite effectively; F-Poison trusts me now." Vivienne's lips curled into a mocking smile. "Your so-called trust was bought with Carl's life. Was it worth it?" "It was!" Ronald insisted. "Anything is worth it for Lauren's revenge, even if it costs the whole Brooks family. Who in this house is truly innocent, anyway?" Vivienne looked at him deeply. Hate is the most terrifying thing in the world; it can make a person unrecognizable. No one knew that Ronald had a deeply cherished girl, and her name was Lauren Piper. Lauren's grandmother had been one of the unfortunate souls to fall by Judith's hand.

The Piper family in Rivenwood could hardly be called aristocratic; at best, they were a minor family—on their ages perhaps in the day, but the Pipers were nothing more than average working folks. Lauren's grandmother had been thick as thieves with Percival's grandmother back then. When Percival's grandmother was murdered, Lauren's grandmother became an unintended victim of the tragedy.

Yet, at that time, Lauren's father was still a bachelor, and Lauren herself had no memories of her grandmother, nor did she find any intimacies of her death. There was no seed of vengeance in Lauren's heart, but Ronald, who dearly loved Lauren, had learned at a tender age that Judith was a murderer, and one of her victims had been Lauren's grandmother. That knowledge had sowed the seeds of hatred within him towards Judith. To Vivienne, Ronald's grudge seemed utterly illogical. However, she could understand his hatred for Scott. Scott had uncovered Lauren's discovery of his dirty secrets and had snatched her up for his virus experiments at the clandestine GTO labs. Ronald had been a powerless witness to it all. After Lauren was taken, Ronald never saw her again, only later receiving the devastating news of her death. So, he hated Scott, and he despised F-Poison. Vivienne cast a cool, indifferent glance at him and said calmly, "You never really understood Lauren."

## Chapter 685

Ronald was visibly puzzled as he furrowed his brow and asked, "What do you mean?" Only Scott, within the entire Brooks family, was privy to his and Lauren's affair. It wasn't surprising that Vivienne knew; her sharp intellect made it easy for her to uncover secrets. But what baffled him were the words that Vivienne had just uttered. Even if Vivienne could dig up dirt on him and Lauren, she couldn't possibly understand what kind of person Lauren was. After all, Lauren had passed away years ago. How could Vivienne know what Lauren was like? Vivienne, hands tucked into the pockets of her jeans, remained cool and aloof. "Did you love her so deeply without knowing that she was a member of an elite special unit?" "What?" Ronald's face was a mask of disbelief. "Lauren joined the unit at sixteen. She completed her education with them, becoming the youngest and most formidable operative they had. At twenty, the unit discovered that GTO was trafficking humans. Since GTO was a major organization, to prevent their operatives from escaping, they sent her undercover. To infiltrate the GTO effectively, she needed two years at home to shed any trace of being a commando. And since she'd been fond of you since childhood, and you'd never forgotten her, she comfortably spent those two years in a relationship with you." Ronald felt like his world was unraveling. He could hardly believe what he was hearing. He looked up at Vivienne, his face a picture of utter confusion. "Discovering that Scott was Mr. B was an accident. When she found out, she reported it to her command immediately. Scott was on her tail, and her unit took the opportunity to have her penetrate the GTO!" Scott, bewildered, looked at her, "How do you know all this?" She didn't even know Lauren. And even if she had the means to find out about her, how could she so easily uncover a commando, especially an undercover one? Vivienne massaged her temples, giving him a look that screamed 'idiot'. "I don't personally know her, yet I know so much. Guess why?" Ronald's mind raced, considering every possibility. But after dismissing several theories, he suddenly looked up at Vivienne and stood up excitedly. "You knew her!" Vivienne's lips curled into a half-smile. "Not too dumb, after all." Ronald was speechless, complaining inside, "Just a moment ago, you were praising my intelligence!" Vivienne: Oh? Did I? Must've slipped. Ronald grabbed Vivienne's arm, his voice trembling, "Then she, she..." Was she really dead? No one knew how devastated he had been upon learning of Lauren's death. If not for his drive for revenge, he might have joined her long ago.

"She's alive and well," Vivienne stated. "Her mission is complete, and she's due to be discharged after she returns to the unit." With that, Vivienne glanced at him coolly. "And in the future, don't do anything foolish. Those signs you've been leaving? F-Poison spotted them ages ago. By the time Mr. Wolf's team got there, they were long gone." She had initially included Ronald in her bionics project to keep an eye on him and to draw out F-Poison. It was only after Percival found F-Poison's hideout and the signs Ronald left that they concluded he wasn't a traitor. He was out for vengeance. The operation was supposed to be foolproof, but those signs allowed F-Poison to slip away again. Was Ronald just naive or outright foolish? Ronald was at a loss for words. He had left those signs to help himself track the enemy, not to hinder Vivienne and her team. "Alright, I've got a poisonous rat to catch. I came here today to get you to stop your idiotic antics. Don't risk your life over this." After a pause, Vivienne added, "F-Poison has kept GTO unbreakable. Not even sacrificing the lives of every member of the Brooks family would earn their trust. The ones who truly care for you are your parents and your siblings." Ronald hung his head. "I'm sorry!" "You owe me no apology," she said, turning to leave. Just as she reached the door, Ronald had a revelation. "The one I've been dealing with isn't F-Poison! She goes by Samantha!" Ronald bit his lip, then added, "But she could be F-Poison..." He raked his hands through his hair in frustration. "I don't know how to explain it. It's like F-Poison is F-Poison, yet not F-Poison!" Vivienne pinched the bridge of her nose, clearly exasperated. "The one you've been dealing with is F-Poison's girlfriend, Samantha, and now she's also F-Poison's decoy," Vivienne said with a deep look at him. "And you say you're smart? Where's the smarts?" Ronald was rendered speechless again. Please, no more insults! "From what I know, catching Samantha won't make her reveal F-Poison's whereabouts," said Ronald. "I've been in contact with her for a long time. She's elusive. She seems to love F-Poison, yet she has many lovers, and she always wears a mask. No one knows her true face... Not only that. She feels very young, yet she's quite old." Vivienne's lips quirked. "The real F-Poison will never see daylight again." With that, she left without another word. At the border of Veridia and Aurentia. In a makeshift command center, a man approaching fifty stood with his hands behind his back. The area had just seen a battle and was now in a state of repair. A man in black approached and respectfully said, "Mr. Linklater!" The man turned his head, a quizzical expression framing his face. "Speak." "Your dad Yorick is safe and sound. As far as the investigation goes, nothing points to Percival..." The man in black hesitated, unsure if he should continue. With a sidelong glance, the other man said with a cool and steady voice, "Out with it." "I believe the Linklaters might be involved," the man in black finally said. The other man's eyes narrowed slightly, a silence enveloping him for a long moment. After a while, he spoke again, "And what of that other matter? Any news?"

"Nothing yet," the man in black paused before continuing, "The girl from back then mustn't forget your name. None of you shared names at the time, and you haven't returned home for years, it's tough to find her with just the sketch you provided." It was a sore subject for him. Mr. Linklater had a lost love, the only woman who had ever truly held a place in his heart.

Years ago, this man had been called away on urgent business, leaving without a chance to find her again once his affairs were in order, she had vanished without a trace.

The last known whereabouts of the woman were with the Hawthorn family, but beyond that nothing) They hi fprecbash@hipeient in combat, but their investigative skills were lacking, especially after spending so many years on the frontier, out of touch with domestic affairs. By the time they got around to inquiring at the Hawthorn estate, she had long since departed. So Mr. Linklater had sketched a portrait and sent them searching. But who would have guessed that Veridia's undefeated general drew worse than a child's scribbles? Years ago, they received word that the woman had died, leaving behind a daughter. Mr. Linklater tasked them with finding this daughter, but it was like searching for a needle in a haystack, nearly impossible given the sketch. It was harder than any battle they had ever fought. The man frowned, his decision made. "Prepare everything. We're heading home." Finding her would require his own hands.

## Chapter 686

After leaving the Brooks Mansion, Vivienne and Percival had hopped aboard a private jet and touched down in M State.

Stepping off the jet, they were met by a line of Percival's men, clad in black suits, standing rigid like soldiers. It was an impressive sight.

"Mr. Wolf, seems like you've carved out quite the kingdom for yourself here," Vivienne said, her eyes crinkling with a teasing allure.

She knew her Mr. Wolf had more than one identity—there was the public one as the head honcho of Vanguard Agency, and then there was the private one, Mr. Percy, whose depths she hadn't plumbed.

Looking at the reception they got, it was clear Mr. Wolf was a big fish in this area. How much dough was he stashing on the side? Percival looked at her fondly and playfully tapped her nose. "This is my turf."

As if reading her thoughts about his secret stash, he chuckled softly. "There's no secret fund. All the income from here is being accounted for. I'm going to hand it all over to you in due time."

"Not bad! You're on the ball," Vivienne replied, clearly pleased. Her three uncles trailed behind, cringing at the display. They were here for a rescue, not to witness this lovey-dovey nonsense!

They settled into the lavish accommodations arranged for them, places that outshone even the grandeur of the Ellington and Perez family estates. Hardly had they sat down when someone came in with news: three men had been spotted down at SouthMine.

Maddox, Fredrick, and Yuri, eager to get to SouthMine and pull off the rescue, were bewildered to find Vivienne and Percival still lounging, sipping water without a hint of urgency.

"Aren't we going to move? Shouldn't we rush to save them?" they asked, baffled by the couple's nonchalance. Percival explained, "My people have got them covered. They won't let anything major happen."

Vivienne set down her teacup, shadows flickering in her eyes. "If they went through all this trouble to lure us here, why not play along?"

At first, when the sanatorium went up in flames, it was Ronald's doing—he didn't want her to find Carl and prevent him from seeking revenge. But as they were about to be escorted back by Percival's men, they learned that Larry and the others had been abducted by another group, one that intended to draw her and Percival out.

Whether this was Samantha's doing or someone else's was still unknown. Vivienne and Percival had come personally to see what grand scheme had drawn them to M State. "You two mean to say..." Fredrick was the first to catch on. Before he could finish, Vivienne nodded in confirmation.

Maddox, looking at the two, couldn't help but speak up. "Vivienne, if you guys had this figured out, why didn't you clue us in sooner?"

Anxiety had been eating at the three uncles over this whole affair.

Vivienne offered an apologetic smile. "We got caught up discussing things on the plane, and it slipped my mind." Fredrick, Maddox, and Yuri exchanged looks of silent exasperation.

But surely, this couldn't be their niece's fault.

No, it had to be that Percival's influence was to blame!

Yes, whenever there was trouble, it was surely Percival's fault, not their innocent Vivienne!



The uncles nodded in rare agreement.

It was just another day of Percival being unwittingly targeted.

Meanwhile, down in SouthMine...

"Larry, we can't wait any longer," Carl said after a full day, hungry and thirsty, unable to bear it any longer. "If we don't find a way out, we're going to starve to death down here."

Larry, with furrowed brows and a grim expression, agreed. "We can't keep waiting. Vivienne must be tied up with something, or this place is just hard to find. Waiting for her isn't working."

The thought made Larry seethe. Vivienne had entrusted him with a solo mission, and not only had he failed, but he had also ended up trapped.

It was embarrassing for a man of Emerald Mountain's caliber to be kidnapped like this.

He had been drugged and overpowered without so much as a chance to fight back. The identity of those behind the kidnapping was still a mystery, and the more he thought about it, the more agitated he became.

Because his body hadn't yet shaken off the drug's effects, he hadn't dared to act rashly all day. But now, with no sign of Vivienne and their strength waning after a day without food, they were at their limit.

If they waited any longer, they might as well sign their own death warrants.

Larry's face set in determination as he stood. "The priority is finding a way out."

Still weak but resolute, Carl agreed. "We'll have to save our. elveg-Maybe Vi lenneerat fied MEeritrance to el |

this sewer. Let's look around; maybe we can find it."

Huxley, shivering, stood behind the two men, silent. Larry didn't bother with Huxley, barely resisting the urge to punch the whiny man. But right now, he didn't have the luxury of indulging his anger. Standing up, he said, "Stick close to me."

Carl followed, still weak but keeping up with Larry's stride. Huxley lagged, clutching at Carl's sleeve as though fearing being left behind.

In this place, the only thing he could do was keep up with the other two. Though he knew their character was not to abandon him, he couldn't help but worry.

Ahead, darkness stretched out, seemingly without end.

Huxley's voice trembled as he surveyed the surroundings, mustering the courage to ask, "How long before we can get out of here? Are we sure we're not lost?"

He had warned them earlier not to

wander aimlessly. The ceiling

tunnels below were a maze; and one

Revetie could mean they would

never see daylight again. Please read

the original content at

NovelDrama.Org.

Despite his warnings, the other two felt compelled to search for an exit. Huxley, too scared to be left alone, had no choice but to follow.

Now, he regretted not staying put.

Larry had little patience for anyone beyond Vivienne and their mentor. Annoyed by Huxley's question, he growled, "Shut it!"

Carl quickly intervened, "Larry has more experience than us. St RE put would have been a sign of our death. Tales there's a draft in this mine shaft, which means there's got to be a way out."

Their current predicament was to figure out an escape. The kidnappers had yet to show their faces, and their intentions remained a mystery.

As they continued their search, they realized that what they had mistaken for a sewer due to the darkness was actually an old mine.

The further they trudged, the more expansive the mine seemed to become, but where it led was anybody's guess.

Chapter 687

Larry grunted in agreement.

Huxley, hearing the affirmation, let out a sigh of relief and gripped Carl's sleeve tighter, his gaze dropping as he lost himself in thought.

The group trekked on, the passage of time lost to them until a faint glimmer of light hinted at the end of their subterranean journey.

"Thank God," Huxley exclaimed, spotting the brightness ahead. "Looks like we're finally going to see the light of day!"

The oppressive darkness of the mine shafts had been nearly suffocating, and the promise of escape was a balm to his weary spirit.

Larry, however, squinted at the light suspiciously, his instincts on high alert. Things were never this easy.

If an exit was so conveniently placed, what was the point of dragging them down here in the first place?

His steps became cautious as he whispered a warning to the others, "Stay sharp. Something's fishy up ahead." They continued, the light growing stronger, beckoning them forward despite the potential danger.

Emerging from the stifling confines of the mine, they found themselves in a surprisingly large clearing.

"Did we actually make it out?" Carl muttered, disbelief etched across his face.

Larry's brow furrowed tighter. He was half-expecting an ambush.

Free from the claustrophobic tunnels, Huxley took a deep breath, allowing himself a momentary sense of relief. The last thing he wanted was to revisit the horrors of the mine. Although Larry and Carl were with him, that was still a terrifying experience.

"Tsk." Just then, as if on cue, a woman adorned with a golden half-mask appeared, her form draped in a striking red dress that hugged her curves like a second skin. She oozed an air of mystery and grace.

With her hands on her hips and a silver fan in her grasp, she had the poise of a seasoned actress on stage, though how long she had been there was anyone's guess.

Her gaze swept over the trio, and with a flick of her fan, she clapped lightly, her laughter tinged with a hint of praise. "Not bad. You've made it here quicker than expected."

Larry, the only one with any real fighting prowess among them, stepped forward.

The effects of an earlier drugging had worn off, and his strength was nearly restored. But he knew this woman's skills were superior to his own; her mere presence, undetected until now, was proof enough.

"Who are you?" Larry's voice was flat, his eyes sharp.

Back home on Fariana Isle, his word was law, but here in M State, he was effectively alone.

The woman's lips, visible beneath her mask, curved into a mocking smile. "You're not worthy of that knowledge." Larry lunged at her, but she anticipated his attack with eerie precision, dodging with effortless grace.

As she sidestepped, her fan snapped open, revealing needles that flew at Larry. He narrowly avoided them, rolling away, dust-clad and coughing up blood.

He hadn't expected to be bested so easily. "That's the standard of Emerald Mountain's disciple? Disappointing." she taunted lightly. Larry coughed up another mouthful of blood in response.

Mockery laced her voice as she continued, "You aren't waiting for your precious senior and the Nine Mystics Society to save you, are you?"

The knowledge that this woman was so well-informed about Vivienne and the Nine Mystics Society unsettled Larry. Why let them escape if only to humiliate them?

He had a nagging feeling that there was more to their abduction than what met the eye.

"All those marks you left behind? My people have cleaned them up nicely," she said, fanning herself leisurely as if sipping afternoon tea in a sunlit garden.

Just as despair was setting in, a sound echoed from behind them.

"Disappointing, you say?" From the shadows emerged Vivienne and Percival, hand in hand, their expressions unreadable. The masked woman's sneer waned at the sight of them together. "Oh? You two are a pair now?"

Anyone eavesdropping might've mistaken them for old friends.

"That's none of your concern," Vivienne retorted, thrusting her needles at the red-dressed enigma, who dodged with a dancer's grace.

The woman laughed softly. "Impolite as ever. I held you as a child, you know."

Vivienne's assault intensified at the revelation, but the mysterious woman parried each attack with seeming ease.

Larry, watching in disbelief, realized even Vivienne struggled against her.

"You're with F-Poison, aren't you?" Vivienne asked, stepping back.

The woman easily avoided Vivienne's flurry, her disdain apparent at the mention of the name.

"F-Poison? He's not even in my league."

If F-Poison was beneath her, then a larger conspiracy was at play, and this woman's identity was beyond their reach.

"I must admit, Samantha did well bringing you here," the woman continued.

Vivienne frowned, her suspicions with Mr. Wolf confirmed.

"Mr. Wolf, lend a hand, would you?" Vivienne called to the exchange

the masked woman.

Percival chuckled softly. "Alright then." No sooner had he spoken than he darted towards the woman, his movements sharp and forceful.

With Percival entering the fray, the tide of the battle shifted almost immediately. The women sensing Renee and S were turning against her, brandished her fan menacingly at the two men.

Larry, having previously witnessed the deadly potential of that fan, ordered the women to stop.

"Ha >» Watch out, that thing's loaded with poison needles!"

## Chapter 688

When Vivienne and Percival turned to look again, the woman in red had vanished without a trace. Vivienne wanted to chase after her, but Percival grabbed her wrist. "Vivienne, let it go. She hasn't shown us her full hand yet." Even for Vivienne and Percival, it had been a stalemate at best. If they pursued her, their chances of victory were slim.

Besides, their main reason for coming to M State was to rescue people, and now that they had, their mission was complete. However, they still hadn't figured out why the puppet master behind this charade had gone to such lengths.

Vivienne peered in the direction the red-clad woman had disappeared, her gaze murky and unreadable.

Atop a nearby hill, the woman in red stood, her eyes fixed on the scene below where she could see Vivienne's group. Lucky for her, she had packed a smoke grenade, which briefly obscured their vision, allowing her a swift escape.

It had been years, and it was time for her to return to Veridia.

She scoffed disdainfully, snapped her fan shut, and walked away. "Wait for it. We'll meet again."

Elsewhere.

Huxley had fainted from fright during the scuffle and was now jabbed awake by Vivienne's needle. "You guys alright?" Vivienne asked, looking toward Larry and Carl.

Larry, clutching his chest, replied, "Vivienne, we're fine."

He had sustained some injuries, but they weren't a big deal for him.

Carl shook his head, too, indicating he was fine.

Huxley, however, was a different story. Upon waking and finding familiar faces - and the red-clad woman gone - he knew he had been saved and burst into tears.

"I thought I was a goner..." Larry looked at him and wanted to punch him out of frustration but restrained himself for Vivienne's sake.

"Did anyone see what she looked like under that mask?" Yuri couldn't help asking. The woman had given him an odd sense of familiarity as if they had met before. The mention of having held Vivienne as a child had also piqued his curiosity. However, he combed through his memory but found no trace of her.

"Uncle, it's no use. The face under the mask was probably not her own." These people are masters of disguise; they wouldn't dare show their true faces in public. Larry stood up. "Vivienne, she mentioned Samantha. What's that about?"

He had been on a solo mission from Vivienne, part of which was to investigate Samantha's whereabouts. Instead, he ended up being the one kidnapped, a humiliating turn of events for him.

Vivienne chuckled, looking at Percival. "Mr. Wolf, it's time to head home. Some webs need untangling."

The uncles were full of questions, wondering why they were returning home without having completed their mission. Were they just going to leave the woman in red unchased?



"Okay," Percival nodded.

Everything was in control except for the woman in red. However, she was not exactly going to cause a problem. After all, they had deliberately allowed some things to happen so they could achieve the optimal result.

"So, what was our purpose here in M State? Apart from being third wheels, what else did we accomplish?" Vivienne's three uncles wondered.

Vivienne and Percival: Don't blame us! Larry: You get used to it.

Nonetheless, Vivienne checked them for injuries. The woman in red's moves had been bizarre, and this was the first time Vivienne had encountered such tactics. The silver needles from her fan were coated in a deadly poison, which would have required her some time to counteract.

After examining them and finding only minor injuries, a cracked rib for Larry, and a severely shaken Huxley, Vivienne addressed the latter, "Didn't F-Poison capture you? How did you end up here?"

Huxley's tale of woe began. "I have no idea! Back then, Mom lost everything for that man, leaving my sister and I with only each other to depend on. Later, I was captured, and F-Poison dumped me in an asylum.

Living with those maniacs was hell! It was torture! But when I almost lost it, she suddenly brought me to this sanatorium, where I found Carl. You guys know what happened next."

"I see." Vivienne's eyelids lowered, hiding the look in her eyes.

"Do you want to come back with us?" She asked.

"Yes!" Huxley replied without hesitation.

Vivienne's lips curved in a mysterious smile. "Alright then."

The roar of private jets could be heard outside. The uncles peeked out to see two sleek private planes.

Fredrick couldn't help but ask, "Just two planes? How will we all fit?"

Percival answered, "Uncles, Vivienne and I will head back first. In a day, someone will come to take you back to Veridia." Everyone was puzzled.

Vivienne explained, "We have some business to take care of back home. Uncles, you know what I mean."

As the engines of the private jets hummed, a new chapter awaited Vivienne and Percival while the uncles were left to ponder the mysterious events of M State.

The three uncles finally had their lightbulb moment. No wonder they knew and where Lertin and Huxiewer were yet Vivienne and Percival never rushed to their rescue. They weren't even worried.

It was clear now; they had a different plan all along.

Vivienne hadn't shared a peep about this with them. It must've been Percival's influence! Yes, that had to be it!

Then it dawned on the trio all at once—their dear niece Vivienne

married Percival. They hadn't discussed the score with him yet. How could they possibly let him off the hook so easily?

"Percival, you've got some explaining to do about sneaking off to get out! And with Vivienne!" the uncles cried in unison, a united front ready to take him to task.

Vivienne stood off to the side, a playful spark in her eyes, as she watched Percival with a look that said, "I can't wait to see you wiggle your way out of this one."

Chapter 689

Percival massaged the bridge of his nose, a sense of inevitability hanging in the air.

With a soft cough to clear his throat, he said, "Uncles, forgive me, I can't wait any longer for Vivienne. Marrying her isn't about weighing the pros and cons; it's about giving her my whole heart. Rest assured, as long as I draw breath, Vivienne will never be aggrieved!"

Maddox had intended to give Percival a hard time, but faced with such sincere devotion, he found himself momentarily at a loss for words.

Fredrick and Yuri exchanged glances. They had been quite cross, but now their anger seemed to have dissipated. What had gone wrong?

Vivienne glanced at her three uncles and smiled. "Don't worry, Uncles. Getting married was my idea. I trust him." The uncles looked at each other and sighed softly.

What could they say?

Their little angel's heart was already so entwined with Percival that they feared she might get upset with them for trying to settle scores with him!

Oh well, it was done!

The license was signed; what else could be done? They couldn't seriously expect them to divorce, could they? That was the last thing they wanted.

"If that's how you feel," they conceded, "then let it be. But Percival, Vivienne is our treasure. We expect you to throw a fitting wedding."

"Of course! I'll give Vivienne the grandest wedding in the world!" Percival declared.

Richard and Cecilia had planned to discuss the wedding arrangements with the Perez family, but the commotion involving rogue robots in town had them worried that someone might use the incident to harm both the Ellington and Perez families, so they shelved the plans for the time being.

However, once this matter was settled, the wedding would indeed be the next order of business.

After a brief chat, Percival and Vivienne prepared to head back home.

Just as they were about to leave, Vivienne suddenly remembered something. "Mr. Wolf, hold on, I forgot something." Percival nodded and waited patiently.

Vivienne returned to where the woman in red had attacked her, carefully scouring the ground. She found a silver needle and a sealed bag, meticulously packaged it, and slipped it into her pocket.

Once aboard the plane, Percival held Vivienne's hand. They had been through a lot, and she was tired.

With Percival by her side, she felt especially at ease and soon drifted into sleep.

In the distance, the woman in red watched the private jet disappear into the sky before turning to leave.

Her hunch was correct; this visit to M State was merely a ruse, coincidentally aligning with her own objectives.

She chuckled to herself. The ranks of F-Poison were thinning; F-Poison was barely hanging on. If that was the case, it was time to let him vanish.

F-Poison had lingered too long in power. It was time for someone more capable to take the reins.

Once back in Veridia, Percival and Vivienne wasted no time deploying their people nationwide to capture Samantha. In a suburban area, Vivienne and Percival sat in their car.

Vivienne rolled down the window, glanced at the ongoing manhunt outside, and mused, "Mr. Wolf, what do you think that woman in red is after?"

The woman in red seemed to hold little regard for F-Poison, the notorious founder of RST, whose tactics had become many people's nightmares. Yet, in her eyes, F-Poison seemed no more than an ant.

"She's an enigma," Percival said, his voice tinged with gravity. Vivienne raised an eyebrow. "How much of an enigma?" Percival handed her his phone; on the screen was a message from minutes earlier that read, [No record found!]

"I had our people here and in M State investigate her before we came back. All the information is the same. There's nothing on

her. It was the first time he had searched for someone and come up with absolutely nothing.

Even for the mysterious F-Poison, there was some information; at the very least, they knew F-Poison was the head of GTO, that he was not alone, and they had some leads on his covert dealings.

But this woman was a ghost in all major factions and even among the ancient warrior lineages.

Vivienne looked at the message on the phone, handed it back to Percival, and smirked. "Looks like she's an even trickier opponent than F-Poison!"

Percival's face grew stern. "We don't know her purpose yet. You must be careful when I'm not with you."

He paused before adding, "By the sound of it, she seems to know you. I have a hunch she's planning to make a move on you."

"Don't worry," Vivienne assured him, "I'll take good care of myself."

Since the red-clad woman's appearance, Vivienne had felt an immediate danger, like the setback she faced when confronting a powerful adversary.

Even though they had forced the woman to retreat in their last fight, she still believed she had shown her full strength.

Yet, Vivienne could also sense that the woman might be injured internally. She couldn't explain why she felt this way.

But right now, Vivienne thought if the woman weren't injured and had used her full power, she might have already met her maker. She didn't doubt for a second that she could be the woman's target.

So, it was crucial to capture Samantha as quickly as possible, hoping to glean some clues from her.

Only by fully understanding the enemy could they prepare thoroughly; she didn't want to die without knowing how it happened.

"Percival, Madam, we're ready to move in," Thomas announced, approaching them dressed not in combat gear but in plain clothes.

Because the Vanguard Agency didn't

greenlight this operation, she had tapped in on the salaries of the NDMA's Sonny while Vivienne called upon the agents of the Nine Mystics Society.

To play it safe, they hadn't brought along any team members from the Vanguard Agency except for Percival himself and Leopold. "Right," Vivienne said, glancing at the villa not too far away. "Are we sure our target's in there?"

"Yes," Thomas replied. "Our thorough surveillance has verified that Samantha is inside that villa."

"It's go time!"

With those words, Vivienne rolled up her window, flung open the car door, and stepped out.

Percival followed suit, right on her heels.

## Chapter 690

Tom raised his hand, signaling the squad to advance. The crew approached the villa at a measured pace.

Vivienne and Percival lagged behind, letting the first wave take point before ambushing, quickly followed by the second. It wasn't long before the villa was surrounded.

Inside the villa.

Samantha's eyes snapped open, her hand instinctively touching her face. Sensing something amiss, she bolted up and strode to the mirror. Her eyebrows knitted tightly together at her reflection.

Her face was etched with wrinkles. Her skin was aging rapidly.

"Damn it!" she cursed, slamming her palm down on the wooden desk, which splintered under the force. "Another failure." She had slept all day, yet the lines on her face hadn't softened. ST-1 couldn't stave off her aging.

At this rate, she would die before getting what she wanted.

Samantha composed herself, then dialed a number on her phone.

"Didn't | say no calls unless it's urgent?" a gruff voice snapped from the other end, clearly irked.

Ignoring his tone, Samantha went straight to the point. "Time to develop a new drug. ST-1 isn't cutting it. | think we can start by..." She stopped mid-sentence, bolting to the window. Seeing the siege outside, her expression darkened.

"What's going on?" the man demanded.

"I've been made."

"Idiot!" he barked.

Samantha frowned, a cold edge to her voice. "Save your insults. Better hurry if you want to save me."

"You're useless," the man scolded, but Samantha cut him off with a scoff.

"I have a new research direction. If you don't save me, you can kiss your desires goodbye."

She knew she couldn't escape this time. She had evaded capture before, using her tech savvy, but if Vivienne was so prepared that she could not even notice the siege beforehand, her options were limited. She had to rely on that man to get out of here alive, or today would be her last.

The man on the other side of the call remained silent as if he were contemplating whether it was worth it to save her. "Wait there!" After quite some time, the man finally said and hung up.

Samantha exhaled with relief silently, turning back to the scene outside.

Vivienne and Percival were at the villa's front, and someone was unloading a cart full of explosives.

They mean to blow up the place, she realized, her eyes narrowing.

She had clearly underestimated Vivienne.

Samantha had chosen this location for its strategic advantage, using high-tech to cloak the area behind an illusionary barrier. But somehow, Vivienne had found her.



Her eyes narrowed as she grabbed an object from the drawer, her last resort.

As she contemplated her next move, the door burst open.

Vivienne and Percival stood there, their expressions cool.

Samantha chuckled. "Didn't expect you to be first. Thought your mother would beat you to it."

Vivienne, hands in her pockets, looked down at Samantha, her eyes gleaming with a hint of mischief. Probably because of her running earlier, a few strands of stray hair dangled before her eyes, adding a unique allure to her.

"Mom's not needed to handle you." "So, you think you can take me?" Samantha taunted with a smile. "Why not try?" Vivienne's smile was bright yet unreadable.

Samantha, rattled by Vivienne's confidence and beauty, recovered quickly. "Let's talk. Might be our last chance, nephew and... niece-in-law."

She needed to stall for time so that man could rescue her. She was fairly certain that she would not be able to escape using only the thing in her hand.

Vivienne and Percival chuckled.

Vivienne pulled up a chair, sitting down with an air of authority. "Feeling chatty today, Auntie. Does my uncle know about your affairs?"

Samantha stiffened. "You know about that?"

"I know a lot. Like the fact that the man you have locked up as Flynn Ellington isn't the real one. He is Francis. The real Flynn died in that shootout years ago," Vivienne said, her gaze piercing.

"Francis, codename F-Poison. Founder of RST, CK, and GTO. And you, Imogen, your real name is Samantha! You and F-Poison grew up together. You must be 90 years old now, right?"

Samantha's eyes widened in disbelief, and she took a step back subconsciously. "How did you find out?" "Patience. I'll explain," Vivienne said, toying with the ring on her finger, the symbol of the Order of Nine Mystics Society.

"You've been involved in dark industries, even kidnapping infants and scientific prodigies, especially in medicine. You've been using these geniuses for your twisted experiments.

ST, ST-1, virus research, and the potion my mother destroyed at the outset—these experiments were aimed at achieving immortality. Craving eternal youth, delved into the secret arts of ancient warrior lineages, mastering the art of the face swap. You've lived under various guises, haven't you?"

Vivienne paused, her gaze locking onto Samantha before she allowed a sly smile to curve her lips. "Am I right?"

Samantha swallowed hard, words failing her. At that moment, she was convinced Vivienne was the devil incarnate. A devil far more terrifying than she could ever be!

Vivienne was pleased with Samantha's reaction and continued, "You've poured fortunes into this claimed countless lives only to find that you're never quite satisfied your ambitions. Take your ST-1—it's impressive stuff, rapidly regenerating human organs, but that's where it ends. It falls short of granting eternal life—it can't even guarantee a lifespan of three years.

So, you resorted to sacrifice F-Poison. Since F-Poison wore Flynn's face, you were certain that no matter what atrocity you could cover for him. That way, your mole in the Vanguard Agency could keep feeding F-Poison your latest findings. And should you ever strike gold with your experiments, F-Poison would break out of prison with ease. Unfortunately for him, he's never getting out now."