

Million-Dollar 71

Chapter 71

Gabriel didn't even have a chance to explain himself before the other party hung up the phone.

He stared at his phone, looking completely dumbstruck. He then turned to look at a cold Vivienne, speechless.

At that moment, the few staff members with Gabriel received phone calls too, their faces turning sour in an instant.

One of them walked up to Vivienne and apologized. "We're really sorry. We screwed up and accused you of forgery without confirming the claims. Our boss just confirmed that your graduation certificate is legit. We're really sorry for the trouble we've caused."

Vivienne just stared at them, not saying a word.

The staff members were on edge, fearing Vivienne would hold them accountable. They quickly tried to explain, "Ms. Vivienne, we're truly sorry. We had no idea Gabriel hadn't double-checked your information. Now, our boss has decided to fire him. We'll also compensate you for the inconvenience we've caused you. We hope you can forgive us."

They really didn't know Gabriel hadn't double-checked Vivienne's graduation certificate.

Before they came to the school, everyone was busy. Then Gabriel suddenly wanted them to investigate

a case of diploma forgery. Given Gabriel's rank, they had to follow his lead.

Before leaving, they specifically asked Gabriel if he had checked in the system, and he said that he

had.

However, they didn't know Gabriel hadn't checked at all.

The staff members were furious at this point, wishing they could beat Gabriel up. They were furious at

Gabriel. Why did he have to get them into this?

Before Vivienne could reply, Mr. James walked over and snorted. "If apologies worked, what would we

need cops for? You've disrupted the school's meeting, falsely accused my student without evidence,

and caused her a great deal of distress. We can't accept your apology. Later, we'll get our lawyers

involved."

Mr. James glanced at Gabriel and said coldly, "This is a serious mistake, and you're just firing him? I'll

have my lawyer investigate thoroughly to see if he's done anything else against the rules."

The staff members were in a pickle, but they knew it was pointless to try to defend themselves when

Vivienne and everyone were already so angry.

Besides, Gabriel started this. They would have to report back to their boss, so they left with him.

After they left, Percival, sitting at the back, lightly tapped his wheelchair. "Thomas, take care of this."

"Alright." Thomas responded and pulled out his phone to make a call.

Vivienne took her seat again, and the students and teachers began to whisper among themselves.

"What just happened? Why did those people just leave?"

"I overheard a bit. Apparently Ms. Vivienne's graduation certificate is real."

Earlier, Gabriel and Vivienne were too far away for them to hear the conversation clearly.

As everyone was discussing, the principal picked up the microphone. "As you all know, I've hired a new

class advisor for Class Eighteen, Ms. Vivienne. She went to great lengths to bring in Mr. James's team

to teach, but many people are unhappy with her, thinking she got in through connections."

After Lysander said this, he paused and, after a few moments, continued, "Today, I will show Ms.

Vivienne's graduation certificate on the screen. Judge for yourself if she is qualified to be your teacher."

After Lysander finished, the dean put a photo of Vivienne's graduation certificate on the screen.

Not many people knew Vivienne had a double doctorate, so everyone was even more surprised when

they saw her certificate.

At the same time, Lysander's voice rang out again. "Ms. Vivienne took the college entrance test at fourteen and was the top student nationwide. At sixteen, she earned a double doctorate. Do you think such qualifications need to be obtained through connections?"

"Wow! Ms. Vivienne is that amazing? The top student in the country at fourteen and a double doctorate at sixteen? She's a genius!"

"Class Eighteen is so lucky! With such an excellent teacher, I guess their results in the college entrance test this year will be outstanding, right?"

The most shocked of all were, of course, the students of Class Eighteen.

At first, they were tamed by Vivienne because she indeed had the qualities of a great teacher. Not only that, but they were afraid of her too.

Later, Vivienne brought in Mr. James' team. They only thought Vivienne had extensive connections, since Vivienne didn't teach them personally. They thought Lysander brought Vivienne in just to keep them focused on their studies so Mr. James' team could teach better.

But who could have thought that Vivienne's qualifications were this high?

Wasn't this a blessing for them?

With excellent teachers like Vivienne and Mr. James's team, they seemed to see a glimmer of hope for their futures.

While everyone was discussing, Arabella, who was sitting in the front row, clenched her fingers so hard that her nails dug into her flesh without her feeling it. Her face was pale, and she was biting her lip while staring at the certificate on the screen. She thought she was hallucinating.

Coral next to her was the same. "How could this be? Vivienne really has PhDs? Arabella, hasn't she always been in the village? I thought she never left her home? How did she take the exams?"

Arabella didn't say a word. Her face was expressionless.

She couldn't have imagined Vivienne's qualifications were real.

Ever since Vivienne came back, her status had been threatened.

Her high and mighty status as the only daughter was gone. She had become nothing but a foster daughter.

She thought she could find superiority in academia, but she got totally schooled by Vivienne.

Vivienne!

Why her?

How could a country bumpkin like her become the nation's top student at 14?

And get double PhDs at 16?

How on earth could this happen? They were both daughters of the Hawthorn family, but she had to call

Vivienne her teacher?

No way!

Vivienne must have cheated!

She must have!

But without proof, she couldn't expose Vivienne.

Arabella watched as the students and teachers around her admired Vivienne, causing her vision to blur

with frustration.

She couldn't let Vivienne surpass her anymore. Who did she think she was?!

After discussing Vivienne's academic achievements, Lysander continued the meeting.

The meeting lasted for more than two hours.

Because they were interrupted by those officials, it was already 12 o'clock at noon when it ended.

Vivienne and Percival returned to Tranquil Estates, with Thomas in the driver's seat.

Vivienne was about to text Matthew when Percival asked, "What's the name of the Hawthorn family's adopted daughter who came today? Gabriel, uh, sorry."

Sorry?

He forgot somebody's name this quickly?

Vivienne was dumbfounded.

Before Vivienne could answer, Percival waved his hand. "Her name's not important. Gabriel is her classmate's uncle."

Upon hearing this, Vivienne put her phone back in her pocket, looked at Percival, and said very seriously, "Her name is Arabella, and her classmate is Coral Lockwood. Mr. Ellington, you're being a tad impolite."

Percival glanced at her with a smirk on his lips. "They don't deserve my politeness."

"Fair point."

"I'll cause some trouble for the Lockwood family and get back at them for you." Percival switched topics.

"Thanks." Vivienne didn't refuse.

She was planning on stirring up some trouble for the Lockwood family anyway.

Gabriel was Coral's uncle, and she had texted Matthew to look into him as soon as he mentioned his name.

First, they falsely accused her of theft, and now of forging documents?!

The Lockwood family must have thought life was too easy and wanted a taste of hardship.

She'd be happy to oblige.

But since Percival was willing to get revenge for her, she saved herself some trouble.

Chapter 72

The weekend rolled around, and school was out.

Although the students from Class Eighteen weren't supposed to have any days off, Vivienne decided to let them enjoy the weekend like normal students because they had progressed much faster than she had anticipated.

On this day off, Dorian and Cordelia were heading back to the Wilson family's home.

Some kind of trouble had come up in Cordelia's household, but she didn't go into specifics. She only mentioned that it was inconvenient to take Thaddeus with them and asked Vivienne to look after him for the day.

Cordelia had prepped both breakfast and lunch. All Vivienne had to do was warm them up.

Vivienne didn't have any experience with kids. She only hung out with Thaddeus occasionally. They played with toys together.

After playing with Thaddeus for half an hour, he got bored. "Sis, I don't want to play with toys anymore."

"What do you want to play then?" Vivienne asked. She didn't have a happy childhood and wasn't sure what kids his age generally liked to play.

Thaddeus hesitated. He looked down, not daring to speak up.

Despite his sister being quite gentle, he was always scared of her for reasons he couldn't pinpoint.

He was afraid that if he made an excessive request, his sister would get angry.

His mom had told him to always listen to his sister and never make her angry.

"Are you scared of me?" Vivienne sat next to him, reaching out to gently pat his head, trying to make

her voice sound as soft as possible.

"I'm not scared!" Thaddeus muttered hesitantly.

He didn't want to lie, but he also didn't want to make his sister feel sad by telling the truth.

Vivienne could read his thoughts clearly. She sighed and pinched the bridge of her nose. Did she really

look that intimidating?

She was always careful when speaking softly to Thaddeus, and she didn't think she had done anything

to scare him.

Vivienne sighed and then patiently said to Thaddeus, "I'm actually quite easy-going, and I won't get

mad at you. You don't have to be scared of me. Just tell me what you want to do, and as long as it's not

too much, I'll agree."

Thaddeus looked up into Vivienne's eyes and blinked, considering her proposal for a long time before

cautiously asking, "Can we go to the amusement park then? Mom and Dad promised to take me a long

time ago, but we never went."

"Sure." Vivienne agreed.

"Really? You're really going to take me to the amusement park?" Thaddeus had assumed Vivienne would refuse, but when she agreed without any hesitation, his eyes lit up with excitement.

Vivienne chuckled and ruffled his hair. "Yes, really. Now go get dressed."

"Thank you, Vivienne." Because he was short, Thaddeus stood on the couch to give Vivienne a peck on the cheek before rushing off to change.

Vivienne was stunned by his sudden affection, and it took her a while to snap out of it.

He was the first boy to ever kiss her.

Thaddeus quickly got dressed, and Vivienne hailed a taxi to take them to the amusement park.

Halfway there, Vivienne's phone rang. It was Isolde.

"Vivienne, why is nobody home? I came to hang out with you."

Vivienne was surprised. "You're at my place?"

"Yes. My brother, Leopold, Thomas, and I have been knocking for a while. Vivienne, where did you go?" Isolde asked.

Vivienne was speechless. Isolde was always around.

She rubbed her temples and said, "I'm taking Thaddeus to the amusement park. Nobody's home today,

so maybe you guys can come another day."

"Amusement park?" Isolde asked excitedly. "I want to come too. Wait for me at the entrance. I'll be there in no time."

Before Vivienne could respond, Isolde hung up.

Vivienne was at a loss for words.

The traffic was heavy because it was the weekend. All the parking spaces near the amusement park were taken, so the taxi had to drop them off at a restaurant close by.

Vivienne paid the fare.

Just as they got out of the taxi, they heard someone shouting anxiously, "Mom, what's wrong? Don't scare me like this! Can someone please call an ambulance?"

Vivienne looked over to see a well-dressed woman in her forties next to an equally well-dressed elderly lady who was lying on the ground, looking pale.

Some bystanders had stopped to watch, while others were kindly dialing for help.

"Is there a doctor around? Can someone help my mom?" The woman panicked when she felt that the

elderly lady wasn't breathing.

Vivienne was standing not too far away, debating on whether to step in and help.

She had already drawn attention the last time she helped Isolde. If she got involved again, more people might start recognizing her.

"Clara?" While Vivienne was debating, Thaddeus suddenly spoke up.

Vivienne turned to him. "You know her?"

Thaddeus nodded. "She visited our house before. She was really nice. Everyone else looked down on my mom and me, but she always smiled and talked to us. She even gave me candy."

All he knew was that people his age called her Clara, but he didn't know who she really was.

Seeing Clara lying motionless on the ground made Thaddeus cry. "Sis, is Clara going to die? She's so nice. Why would she die?"

Vivienne pursed her lips and then patted his head softly. "She's not going to die."

With that, she walked towards Clara.

She sighed inwardly. She studied medicine to save people. She couldn't just stand by and watch someone die because of her own concerns.

If she did that, neither her mom nor her mentor would forgive her.

"I'm a doctor." Vivienne squatted in front of Clara, analyzed her condition, and said to the lady, "Clara's in a bad way. She needs treatment immediately."

"Please, save my mom!" Amid the doubting whispers about Vivienne's young age and her ability to

save lives, the lady kept kowtowing to her.

For her, as long as Clara could be saved, who cared about age?

Vivienne stopped the lady from continuing her kowtowing, whipped out her acupuncture kit from her backpack, and started to work on Clara.

People around started to whip out their phones to record videos, while others were whispering among themselves.

"That old lady looks like she's kicking the bucket already. This young lass isn't afraid of being blamed for it?"

"Ah, these young ones are so green around the gills. They don't understand the complexities of life. If she can't save that old woman, her family will definitely blame her."

Vivienne heard the whispers, but her face didn't change a bit. She just kept on with her acupuncture on Clara.

About half an hour later, Clara suddenly coughed.

The crowd immediately got all hyped up. "She's alive? Holy moly! Did she really just save a dying woman?"

"Is she really alive? Am I dreaming? Do people who can save those at death's door really exist? No freaking way!"

"Why the hell not? That old lady was clearly on her last legs. After this young woman performed acupuncture on her, she bounced back. There are always people out there who are more awesome than you. There are many things that are beyond your understanding. You ain't seen anything yet."

Chapter 73

Outside the crowd, Percival and Leopold Sterling watched the scene unfold before them in astonishment.

They knew Vivienne had some incredible medical skills, but they never expected that she could save someone from the brink of death.

"I never thought there would be anyone with better medical skills than the Mystic Mistress in this world.

Mr. Ellington, you hit the jackpot by marrying Ms. Vivienne." Leopold said, looking quite hyped.

Who in the world could guarantee that they would never get sick in their lifetime?

Especially for people like them who lived life on the edge. They could be ambushed any day.

Having someone with top-notch medical skills by their side was like having an extra life.

Percival nodded. "Indeed."

Vivienne packed up her acupuncture kit and said to the lady, "She's out of immediate danger, but you should still take her to the hospital for a thorough check-up."

After examining Clara, Vivienne knew that the elderly always had various health issues. So, even though she managed to save Clara's life, the remaining issues were minor but still had to be attended to. A trip to the hospital and maintaining her medicine would sort them out.

"I don't need any payment."

With that, Vivienne, hand in hand with Thaddeus, was about to leave when she noticed someone filming with their phone.

The culprit was a guy in his twenties.

Vivienne walked up to him and patted his shoulder. "Filming and uploading to social media without my permission? I'll hold you accountable."

The young guy looked nervous. "Miss, you saved someone. If this gets on social media, you'll become super famous. Don't you want that?"

"I don't." Vivienne replied casually, "Delete it."

Before the guy could say anything else, Vivienne had already taken his phone, did some swift finger work, and the video was deleted.

"Hey, you..." Before the guy could react, Vivienne was already gone.

Vivienne walked out of the crowd and spotted Percival and the others immediately.

Isolde ran over and hugged her leg. "Vivienne."

The little girl was short, so whenever she wanted to hug Vivienne, she could only reach her legs.

Vivienne patted her head and smiled. "When did you get here?"

"We've been here since you started treating the person." They arrived at Tranquil Estates a little after

Vivienne left.

Plus, they drove here, so they arrived just minutes after Vivienne.

There was no parking spot nearby, so they planned to park somewhere close and coincidentally saw Vivienne.

Vivienne hadn't noticed them. "Let's go."

Isolde waved at Thaddeus. "Thaddeus."

Thaddeus smiled back. "Isolde."

Thaddeus was only two months older than Isolde, but every time she saw him, she made sure to greet him properly.

Besides Percival, who was being pushed in a wheelchair by Thomas, everyone else was walking.

Recalling the scene of Vivienne saving the person, Leopold asked, "Ms. Vivienne, who'd you learn your medical skills from? They are quite impressive."

Vivienne coldly responded, "I'm self-taught." Her words carried a hint of arrogance.

Leopold asked, "So if we need medical help in the future, can you help?"

Vivienne glanced at him and replied, "Sure, but it'll cost you."

"That's fair."

Leopold suddenly thought of something. "But why didn't you charge when you treated Isolde and the elderly lady?"

"Because I wanted to, I felt like it. Got a problem with that?" Her attitude left Leopold puzzled. He had no clue what he did to upset her.

Vivienne's rates were actually quite low for her usual standards. Because she dealt with terminal illnesses and emergencies, her prices were naturally high. Of course, it also depended on the specific situation.

She treated both Isolde and Clara out of her own free will, hence no charges. For the wealthy, her starting price was high. It was just the consultation fee alone and didn't include medication.

However, for some reason, she couldn't publicly acknowledge her medical skills, so she hadn't treated many people so far. On the other hand, rich people usually had their own family doctors and regular health checks, so there weren't many critically ill people needing her treatment.

Of course, if she encountered someone who was decent but not well-off, she'd treat them for free.

Leopold asked, "Ms. Vivienne, do you have something against me?"

Vivienne suddenly laughed. "Guess?"

Leopold was speechless. He had no clue.

At the Hawthorn family's home.

Arabella had just finished her meal when Doreen Baker came. She came to pick up Arabella to treat

her daughter, Faye Churchill, at the Baker family's mansion. Arabella didn't hesitate and immediately

followed Doreen.

The Baker family's mansion was in the northern villa district. It was quite a distance from the Hawthorn

family's mansion. It took over forty minutes to drive there.

The Baker family's mansion was even more luxurious than the Hawthorn's. It had a slightly classical

decor that oozed sophistication.

Bertha was the one who opened the door. "Is this Arabella? Come in; we've been waiting for you."

Arabella greeted her politely with a smile. Despite her courteous attitude, there was a hint of arrogance

in her tone.

Bertha ushered Arabella inside and then ordered the maid, "Quickly make a coffee for Miss Arabella."

Arabella interjected. "No need; I still have to study. Let's see the patient first."novelbin

"Faye's upstairs; let's head up." Doreen noticed that ever since Arabella arrived at the Baker Mansion,

she had been acting kinda frosty. It rubbed her the wrong way.

But she had to bite her tongue, considering Arabella was here to treat her daughter.

Arabella frowned a bit. She was clearly not thrilled but didn't say anything and followed Doreen

upstairs.

The curtains in Faye's room were pulled tight, so the room was very dark.

Doreen flipped on the light, and the room brightened up.

Faye wasn't having it when she heard someone was coming to treat her. She was curled up in the

corner, refusing to budge.

Arabella tried to coax her. "Ms. Faye, I can't treat you if you won't let me see your face. I'm a doctor;

you've gotta trust me."

Faye just sat in her corner with her knees drawn up and her head buried deep between her legs. She

didn't utter a word and didn't move an inch.

Arabella tried to persuade her for a long time, but Faye didn't react at all. Arabella was now getting a bit

peevied. "Ms. Faye, I've taken time off from my studies to treat you. If you won't cooperate, I'm just gonna have to leave."

Chapter 74

Doreen felt a twinge of annoyance when she heard what Arabella had to say.

But considering that Arabella could heal Isolde's severe facial scars, she had to swallow her bitterness.

"Sorry, Miss Arabella, ever since Faye got her face damaged, she's become really self-conscious. She doesn't want anyone to see her. Hang on a minute; let me try and persuade her."

Arabella gave a nod as her face grew more impatient. novelbin

Doreen moved to Faye's side and whispered, "Faye, Miss Arabella is a brilliant doctor. You know, the Ellington family's daughter had even worse injuries than you, and she healed her. Let her have a look at you. Once she's taken care of your condition, you'll be able to step out with confidence."

Faye still kept her head down, still not uttering a word.

"You've already taken a half-year break from school. Didn't you say you wanted to go to university? If you keep taking a break, you won't be able to take the college entrance test this year."

Mentioning the college entrance test finally got a reaction from Faye. She lifted her head, and her fierce-looking facial scars could now be seen, but her eyes were full of tears.

"But... I'm so far behind already. Even if I take the college entrance test, I won't make the cut."

"You've always been in the top ten of your grade every year. I'll find you some good private tutors. You'll definitely get in." Doreen patiently persuaded her.

Faye hesitated.

Arabella, having waited impatiently on the side, said, "Ms. Doreen, Ms. Faye, how about I come back another day? I'm really booked up. Time is money."

Doreen frowned. Considering that she needed her help, she had to subtly say, "Please wait a little longer."

Before she could finish speaking, Faye stood up, walked over to Arabella, and said in a low voice,

"Sorry, Miss Arabella, for keeping you waiting. Could you please check me now?"

Arabella finally got a look at Faye's face. Her face was covered in scars and looked hideously ugly.

After seeing Faye's face, she couldn't help but show a disgusted expression, which Faye caught.

Having just plucked up the courage, Faye now felt like shrinking back.

"Sit down; let me diagnose you." Arabella said confidently.

Faye obediently did as she was told.

After the diagnosis, Arabella said, "This condition can be treated. I'll write you a prescription. Take the medication exactly as I prescribe for three days, after which I'll come back for a check-up."

Doreen was ecstatic to hear this. "Really? Faye's face can be restored to its original state?"

"Yes." Arabella replied, "But she must take the medicine as per my prescription. She must first detoxify her body and then apply my ointment."

"Thank you so much. As long as you can cure Faye's condition, I'll give you a generous reward."

Doreen was beside herself with excitement.

Arabella made some polite remarks, wrote the prescription, and then left.

Doreen immediately had someone prepare the medicine.

But Faye felt a bit uneasy.

She tugged at Doreen's hand and whispered, "Mom, can I not take the medicine? I don't really trust her."

"Faye, you can trust Miss Arabella's medical skills. At the Hawthorn family's banquet the other day, I heard everyone talking about how she healed Isolde. It's definitely true."

After hearing this, Faye could only nod in agreement.

At the amusement park.

Thaddeus and Isolde were having a great time.

Thaddeus was often bullied when he was with the Hawthorn family, so he developed a timid and cowardly personality. Cordelia had no say in the Hawthorn family, and Dorian was also bullied, so he hardly ever came to the amusement park.

Thaddeus was excited to have the chance to go out and have fun today. He practically tried every attraction he could.

Isolde, previously disfigured and often scorned, became self-conscious and reluctant to go out, so she'd never been to an amusement park either.

Now that she was able to freely play the games she liked, she was also very happy.

Vivienne, Percival, Leopold, and Thomas followed them. They also felt cheerful as they looked at the joyful smiles on the two kids' faces.

Just then, Vivienne's phone suddenly rang.

Charlotte was on the other end. "Vivienne, where are you? Could you help me with a patient? It's urgent."

At the last Hawthorn family's banquet, Charlotte found out that Vivienne was the one who healed Isolde.

"Sure, send me the address." Vivienne agreed after a brief pause.

Charlotte was the first friend she made in Havenwood. She would always do her best to help whenever she could.

After hanging up, Vivienne received the address from Charlotte.

She turned to Percival. "I have something to take care of. Can you watch Thaddeus for me?"

"Do you need my help?" Percival asked.

"No need." Vivienne paused. "I might not be back soon. Take Thaddeus to get something to eat; I'll cover it."

"I can afford to treat Thaddeus to a meal."

Vivienne gave him a slight smile. "Thaddeus? You're pretty familiar."

Percival said confidently, "We're getting engaged the day after tomorrow. I'm just getting used to it."

Vivienne suddenly leaned in close to his ear. "Don't get too excited. You can still call off an engagement."

She had never thought of marrying Percival.

The engagement was just a necessity at the moment. She needed to find out why Percival had that pendant, why he mentioned her mother, and, most importantly, why he was looking for the whereabouts of the potion.

If Percival was on the opposite side, not only would they not be able to tie the knot, she might even off him with her own hands.

Vivienne called over Thaddeus, gave him a few words, and then took off.

Charlotte left behind the address of a private hospital. Vivienne hopped in a cab and went straight there.

Once she got to the hospital, Vivienne headed for the inpatient department.

Charlotte was waiting at the entrance, with someone standing next to her, but Vivienne couldn't make out their features from this far away.

After seeing Vivienne, Charlotte urgently called out, "Vivienne, over here!"

Vivienne walked over, took a look at the person next to Charlotte, and was taken aback.

That person also got a clear look at Vivienne's face. She was just as surprised and then exclaimed, "It's you!"

Turned out that this lady was Clara's attendant. The same Clara whom Vivienne had saved before.

Vivienne didn't know her name, so she politely nodded and said, "That's me."

"Mom, do you two know each other?" Charlotte looked at them confusedly.

Vivienne asked, "Mom?"

"Yep, she's my mom."

Charlotte finished and then turned to Mrs. Redwood. "Mom, this is the Vivienne I was telling you about.

She's super nice and a brilliant doctor. I brought her here to treat Grandma, but I didn't know that you two knew each other. You never mentioned it."

Mrs. Redwood was stunned for a moment and then broke into a smile. "So you're the one Charlotte always talks about on the phone. What a small world! You've not only helped Charlotte with her studies but also saved my mother-in-law's life. We owe you big time."

Chapter 75

Vivienne's lips twitched a bit.

What a tangled web we weave, huh?

She unintentionally saved someone, who turned out to be Charlotte's grandma.

Charlotte looked at Mrs. Redwood in confusion. "Mom, what on earth is going on?"

Mrs. Redwood then explained, "We just landed today, and your grandmother wanted to get you some pastries from Crystal Bakery. It's hard to find parking there, so your dad and the driver waited in the car while I went with your grandma. But after we bought the pastries, your grandma suddenly fainted. We only had some cash on us, and we left our phones in the car. I was so panicked, but this lady here helped out. Thanks to her, your grandma is fine now."

Upon hearing this, Charlotte looked at Vivienne with gratitude. "Vivienne, you're our family's savior!

How can I thank you? Should I offer myself to you?"

"I'm not into women."

Charlotte laughed and wrapped an arm around Vivienne's neck. "Neither am I, but I'm into you. How about you consider marrying me?"

Vivienne smacked her forehead. "My mom would rise from her grave to scold me!"

Charlotte chuckled, not continuing with her joke.

Vivienne also turned back to the main topic. "Who do you want me to treat?"

"My grandma," said Charlotte.

Vivienne was dumbstruck. "After I treated your grandma with acupuncture, she was fine. She just needs a full body check-up, and if there's any problem, she can just take medicine."

"Ah, you don't understand." Charlotte tried explaining, "After you saved my grandma, my parents immediately brought her to the hospital. This one was the nearest, but it's private. As soon as we arrived, they arranged for her to be admitted and did a bunch of check-ups. It's been hours, and the check-ups are scheduled till the day after tomorrow."

Charlotte was a bit angry. "Spending money is a small issue. The main problem is that the doctor said my grandma's condition is really serious. He scared us half to death. We don't want to casually transfer to another hospital, so I thought of you. Vivienne, please check on my grandma. Can you make sure that she really is okay now?"

Vivienne was at a loss for words.

She always thought she was pretty unethical for her high charges, but it seemed like there were people even less ethical than her.

They arranged for admission without any check-ups? How money-hungry were they?

"Fine, let me take a look."

They opened the door to the ward and found that Clara seemed quite spirited.

Upon seeing Vivienne, she immediately tried to get up. "Isn't this the young lady who saved me? Quick, help me up. I owe you a thank you."

Mrs. Redwood hurried to help her, while Vivienne sat by her bed, pressing her down. "There's no need for formalities. Lie down first; let me check you."

Upon hearing this, Clara obediently lay down.

Vivienne did a check-up on her, and after a moment, she said, "Your previous episode was treated by my acupuncture. It won't recur. But you're older now, so there are some minor issues with your body.

It's not a big problem. You don't need to be hospitalized."

"I knew it!" Clara grumbled, "Those doctors are nothing but swindlers. They are just out to con people

out of their money."

Vivienne silently took out two pills from her pocket. "I have these two pills here. Once you take them, those minor issues won't bother you again."

"These must be expensive, right?" Clara had lived a long life and had seen a lot of people and things.

Vivienne's acupuncture skills even surpassed those of many famous doctors. You couldn't find someone with such skills, even if you had all the money in the world. After all, only a handful of people understood the mysteries of eastern medicine.

With such superb medical skills, the pills she held in her hand definitely wouldn't be cheap.

It seemed like Vivienne intended to give them to her for free.

"It's not expensive." Vivienne smiled, which only added to her beauty.

Clara and Mrs. Redwood exchanged a look as they both broke into smiles. "Alright, we'll buy this medicine."

"Alright."

The ward door was suddenly pushed open, and a man in his forties, dressed in a suit, walked in.

He was Charlotte's father, Anthony Redwood, the chairman of Redwood Group.

As soon as Anthony walked in, Mrs. Redwood greeted him. “Anthony, this is Ms. Vivienne, who saved our mother. Can you believe she’s the Vivienne that Charlotte often talks about?”

Mrs. Redwood quickly recounted the whole story to him.

Anthony chuckled. “I never thought our daughter would start learning on her own without our teaching, and I heard it’s all thanks to you. I’ve been wanting to personally thank you. If you’re free, maybe we could treat you to a meal. How about it?”

“I appreciate the thought, but I have something on today. I will visit you another day.” Vivienne replied politely.

Vivienne only stayed for a while before leaving.

Once she left the hospital, Percival called.

He asked if she was done and if she wanted to join them for dinner. Vivienne asked for the location and then went.

The restaurant was not far from Tranquil Estates.

After dinner, Thaddeus and Isolde fell asleep because they were tired from playing all day.

Vivienne drove them back to Tranquil Estates.

Percival had mentioned before that he wanted Isolde to stay here, but due to some things not yet arranged, she was not brought over. It was a good opportunity today, so she stayed.

The next day, Vivienne drove alone to Emerald Mountain, only telling Dorian and Cordelia that she had important matters and needed to be away for two days, but that she would be back before the engagement.

On the third day, Vivienne and Percival's engagement banquet caused a citywide stir.

On this day, the Hawthorn family publicly acknowledged Vivienne's identity and announced her engagement to Percival, a key man in the Ellington family.

The news quickly caught fire, and the media couldn't get enough of it, stirring up a whole lot of buzz.

The legitimate daughter of the Hawthorn family and Percival from the Ellington family were getting married.

Everyone in town was gearing up for the engagement bash.

The engagement party was held at the Azure Hotel. A middle-of-the-road kind of place. Dorian and novelbin

Cordelia had done their level best.

But because they picked such a hotel, there were quite a few who wrinkled their noses.

"When Mom suggested she handle the engagement party, you insisted on taking the reins. Look at the kind of hotel you've picked!" Michael Hawthorn frowned. He was clearly not impressed. "Are you aware of the Ellington family's standing? Isn't having us dine in this kind of hotel like throwing mud in our dignity? And what on earth are you wearing? Can't you even afford decent clothes? You're gonna make a spectacle of us on such a big occasion!"

Chapter 76

Dorian and Cordelia looked pretty peeved.

Their outfits were freshly bought and cost them a grand. Splurging a thousand bucks on clothes was a bit much for them, but for their daughter Vivienne, they bit the bullet and paid up.

They didn't expect even that to earn them the stink eye.

Today was the engagement party, and the whole Hawthorn clan was there. They were all dolled up to the nines.

If you didn't know better, you'd think the Hawthorns were hosting the show.

Dorian was a bit miffed, but hey, it was Vivienne's party, so he kept his trap shut.

There were four tables set for the party.

Three were hogged by the Hawthorns.

The Ellingtons took up one table. Aside from Richard, the rest of the Ellington crew was there too.

Their group wasn't big. They were just enough to fill one table.

The party was supposed to kick off at noon, but as the clock ticked closer, Vivienne was still a no-show.

Cordelia and Dorian had been blowing up Vivienne's phone, but she never answered.

"What's Vivienne's deal? She's late for her own engagement party and is keeping all these elders

waiting. What gives?" Joseph Hawthorn was still sore from Vivienne's previous scheme, and he hadn't

been able to smooth things over with Octavia yet, so seeing Vivienne playing hooky didn't do him any

favours.

"Joseph, Vivienne's just a country bumpkin. She wouldn't know manners if they hit her in the face.

She's probably trying to embarrass us on purpose now that she's engaged to Mr. Ellington." Alisa

Hawthorn grumbled, sounding as sour as a lemon.

The engagement party was hosted by Dorian's family. It wasn't a big to-do, but the Ellingtons all

showed up in million-dollar luxury cars.

That alone had drawn the attention of all of Havenwood.

Vivienne had snatched away the glory that should have belonged to Arabella, and that didn't sit right with Alisa.

"Hmph, who does she think she is? She's embarrassing us! She should look in the mirror before she acts high and mighty!" Joseph sneered.

The Ellingtons had already shuffled into the private room, while the Hawthorns were still milling about outside, so Percival didn't catch Joseph's snide remark.

Vivienne's phone was still sending every call to voicemail, so Dorian was climbing the walls. Joseph's grumbling was the last straw.

"Joseph, enough! Ever since Vivienne came back, you've been on her case. What did she ever do to you? And by the way, you weren't even invited to this party. If you can't wait, feel free to leave."

Joseph didn't expect Dorian to snap back at him like that, and he got all huffy. "I'm your brother. How dare you talk to me like that? Don't you know your place?"

"You might be my brother, but you're not my dad!" Dorian shot back, fuming. "If you dare badmouth my

daughter again, I'll kick you out! I don't need a brother like you!"

Michael, standing nearby, frowned. "Dorian, that's out of line."

"Out of line?" Dorian retorted. "Who among the whole lot of you here today genuinely wishes well for my daughter? Have any of you given her any gifts? And now you're blaming her for not following the rules? Shouldn't you, as her relatives, be more concerned about her safety? You all seriously lack manners!"

Dorian was truly pissed off now.

He knew Vivienne well. She was a level-headed kid. If she said she'd be back before the engagement party, she'd be back.

But now, the party had been underway for ten minutes, and she was still MIA. Something must have gone wrong.

He was freaking out, but these people were still blabbering on about how Vivienne was rude and ill-mannered. Did they think he was a pushover?

"You!" Michael was ticked off too, but found himself at a loss for words.

"Enough, stop bickering!" Beatrice cut in sharply. "The Ellingtons are all in the private room, and we're out here squabbling. How disgraceful is that?"

At Beatrice's command, Michael and Joseph clammed up.

Beatrice shot them a glare and then turned to Dorian. "Don't blame your brothers for speaking harshly.

It's an important day, and Vivienne's tardiness is unacceptable. The Ellingtons are waiting, and if she's late, people will say the Hawthorns have no manners."

"Mom!" Dorian tried to say something, but Beatrice cut him off. "Go find Vivienne. Enough talk!"

Did he really think she wanted to be here? If it weren't for the Ellingtons' bridal gift, she wouldn't even bother.

Cordelia tugged at Dorian and whispered, "Don't argue with them. Let's try to reach Vivienne first."

"We've tried calling her many times, but she's not picking up. I'm really worried something might have happened to her." Dorian voiced his concerns.

"We were able to get in touch with Vivienne last night. It hasn't been 24 hours yet, so even if we report to the police, they can't do anything." Cordelia thought for a moment before suggesting, "Let's ask

Richard for help. He has a wide network. Maybe he can help us find Vivienne."

Dorian thought for a moment and then nodded. "Alright, let's ask Richard for help."

Just as they were about to approach Richard, they saw Thomas wheeling Percival out. novelbin

"Hello." Percival greeted them. "My grandpa sent me to ask when's the shindig starting?"

"We can't reach Vivienne," said Dorian with a heavy tone. "I'm worried something's happened to her.

We were going to ask your grandpa if he could help locate her."

Percival frowned. "Since when?"

"We were able to reach her last night. About an hour ago, we tried to call her, but she's not answering."

Worry was evident in Dorian's voice.

After pulling out his phone, Percival dialed Vivienne's number, but no one picked up.

He turned to Thomas seriously. "Track Vivienne's phone."

Thomas nodded and went off to do just that.

About five minutes later, Thomas came back.

"The location shows Ms. Hawthorn is in North Shire."

North Shire was on the way to Havenwood.

Percival was silent for a moment and then told Dorian, "I'll go find her."

"Okay, thanks for that." Dorian wanted to go himself, but as the host of the banquet, he couldn't leave.

Percival, being pushed by Thomas, headed towards the private rooms.

"Sorry guys, the engagement party needs to be delayed a bit. Vivienne's run into some trouble; I gotta go fetch her." Percival explained.

"What happened? Why'd she suddenly go AWOL?" Richard asked, looking worried.

"I'm not sure. I'm going to find her now."

Percival and Leopold left.

After they left, Percival's mother, Cecilia, frowned at Richard. "Dad, I've been saying that Vivienne's background doesn't match up with Percival's. You insisted on their engagement, and look at what's happening now. She's nowhere to be found at such an important event."

Richard's face turned stern. "What do you mean 'doesn't match up'? We, the Ellington family, don't have such class distinctions. Don't forget that Vivienne's mother once saved your husband, my son.

Their marriage was agreed upon long ago. You have no place to nitpick. Besides, I've known Vivienne for a while; she's not someone who's tardy. Something must have held her up; let's just wait."

"But..." Cecilia tried to argue, but Richard glared at her.

"If you can't wait, you can leave."

Chapter 77

North Shire.

Vivienne coldly stared at the old lady in front of her, standing tall and saying frostily, "Quit tailing me, please."

The old lady looked back at her with a heartbroken expression. "Missy, lend me a hand, will you? Let me tag along with you to the city. I'm broke, lost my phone, and can't reach my family."

"I'm not a saint!" Vivienne retorted, her voice rising in frustration. novelbin

The biggest mistake of her life was offering a hand to this old lady without getting anything in return, only to find herself in a jam.

She had come down from Emerald Mountain this morning, planning to catch the first flight out to Havenwood, but soon after the descent, she ran into a couple of thugs giving the old lady a hard time and demanding stuff from her. After seeing the old lady's pitiful state, she slipped the thugs a mickey and saved the old lady.

However, the old lady kept sticking to her like glue.

After finding out that the old lady's home was in Rivenwood, she decided to play the good Samaritan

and get the old lady on a plane to there since she was heading for the airport anyway.

But on the way to the airport, she got cut off by some people. Not wanting to waste time, she took them out without breaking a sweat.

Who would have thought that she would then bump into seven or eight waves of people? And they weren't even from the same gang!

She had no clue about the old lady's identity or who she had ticked off. All she knew was that she was losing her marbles because of this old lady and had missed her flight to Havenwood.

She left the old lady behind and walked away, but the old lady stuck to her like glue.

No matter where she went, the old lady was right on her tail.

In the end, she had no choice but to take the old lady with her.

She initially wanted to ask Matthew to send a car to pick them up and take them to Havenwood, but

considering the old lady's odd situation, she didn't want to expose Matthew, so she hired a cab herself.

On the way to Havenwood, the people chasing the old lady didn't let up. Since she was in the taxi, she

couldn't use any drugs, so they drove right up to them.

The driver was scared out of his wits. He refused to drive them any further and dumped them in the middle of nowhere.

Vivienne was at her wit's end. After dealing with the people chasing the old lady, she decided to ditch her and go alone.

Luckily, where the driver had left them wasn't far from Havenwood, so she walked to Havenwood.

But all the way, the old lady kept trailing her. Aware that she was in a bind because of this, the old lady followed her at a distance and didn't dare talk to her.

But now, the people who were after the old lady were gunning for her. They weren't after the old lady anymore but were giving her a hard time.

She had run out of the knockout drugs she carried and was left with no other choice but to take them on.

Vivienne was livid.

"You're a good egg." The old lady said earnestly, "You might not show it, but you're kind-hearted. I

know I've been a pain in the neck, but I promise I'll make it up to you once I find my family. Please lend me a hand. Just get me to the airport."

Vivienne responded, "I'm going to say this one last time. Quit tailing me."

After saying this, she turned and walked away.

The old lady quickly stopped her. "Could you lend me some money? We're already in Havenwood, so they probably won't come after me anymore. Can I hail a cab to the airport?"

Vivienne rubbed her temples. "I don't carry cash. All my money is in my mobile banking app. You lost your phone, so how am I supposed to give you money?"

"Uh..." The old lady was on the verge of tears. "Could you just take me with you then? My son and I were looking for Finnian at Emerald Mountain, but we got chased and lost each other. I don't even know how to get back. Otherwise, I wouldn't bother you. Please feel a bit sorry for this old gal."

Vivienne's eyes narrowed. "Finnian?"

This old lady knew her master?

"Yes, we heard Finnian was at Emerald Mountain. We had some business with him, but the lay of the land at Emerald Mountain is too complicated. We tried going up there several times but failed. You

know Finnian too?"

Vivienne stared at her for a long time before speaking after a brief silence. "What's your relationship with Finnian?"

"We are..." The old lady was about to speak when she suddenly realized something. "I'm sorry, I can't tell you about this. But I swear, I'm not a bad egg. It's those people chasing me who are."

"Do bad eggs have 'I'm a bad egg' written on their faces?" Vivienne asked with an emotionless expression.

"I can assure you that I'm definitely not a bad egg."

Vivienne didn't continue arguing over whether the old lady was a good egg or a bad egg.

After thinking for a bit, she said, "I'll take you to the airport. If anything else happens, you're on your own."

"Okay, okay, I promise this is the last time. If anyone else comes after me, then it's just my lot. I won't follow you anymore."

Vivienne didn't say anything more and just continued walking with the old lady.

They had just entered North Shire, a remote place with no cabs. They had to walk a bit further to hail a cab.

But no sooner had they taken a few steps than a car drove up.

Vivienne looked up and saw it was Percival's car. She was taken aback.

The car stopped in front of her. Percival got out and walked up to her. "Vivienne, what happened?"

Vivienne stared at his legs, looking surprised. "You?"

Wasn't he pretending to be disabled?

He wasn't in his wheelchair.

At this point, Leopold and Thomas got out of the car. "Finally, we've found you. You have no idea. Mr.

Ellington was so worried about you that he left the hotel without even his wheelchair and just got in the car. Thank God, you're okay."

Vivienne felt a warm feeling inside, but she also felt a bit guilty. "I'm sorry. I ran into some trouble and got delayed. Can we reschedule the engagement party?"

The engagement party was supposed to be at noon, and it was almost one now. The elders from both families probably wouldn't wait any longer.

Percival gave her head a rub. "I'm glad you're okay. The engagement's still on. I've explained it to them, so they're still at the hotel."

Vivienne nodded. "Then let's get going."

Only then did Percival notice the old lady next to Vivienne. "Who's this?"

"I saved her on the way. We'll go to the hotel first, and you can arrange for someone to take her to the airport later." Vivienne said.

Percival only had one car. There was definitely no time to take the old lady to the airport now.

Percival nodded, and they all got in the car.

When they arrived at the hotel, Percival sent Thomas to take the old lady to the airport.

Before leaving, the old lady asked Vivienne, "Young lady, could you tell me your name? When I get home safe, I'll have my family thank you."

Vivienne replied, "No need. I hope we never meet again."

The old lady looked a bit disappointed, but she didn't insist. "I'm sorry for the trouble I've caused. I have to go now. I wish you a happy engagement and hope your marriage is blessed."

After the old lady left, Percival, Vivienne, and Leopold went into the hotel.

When they got into the elevator, Vivienne remembered something and suddenly looked at Percival.

"You're just going in like that?"

Percival smirked and said with a laugh, "It's time for my 'disability' to take a hike."

Chapter 78

Vivienne and Percival swung open the doors to the private dining room, drawing the attention of everyone present.

"Is this how she behaves at an engagement party? She's acting all high and mighty, not giving us, the older generation, a second glance. If she really does marry Percival, she's likely to become even more arrogant and rude." Alisa, already somewhat displeased with Vivienne, was seething after having to wait for her.

Vivienne gave them a cold glance. "Did I invite you?"

When Richard and Dorian had discussed the engagement arrangements, they'd planned for only two tables. None of the Hawthorn family's relatives were included in the guest list.

With just one glance, she saw that the Hawthorn family had occupied three tables and uninvited guests had shown up. And they were blaming her?

"You're so rude! Can't you even take criticism for your own faults?! Is this how your mother raised you?"

Beatrice yelled angrily.

Vivienne's face darkened. She walked over to Beatrice and said coldly, "Don't you dare mention my mother. You're not worthy!"

"You!" Beatrice was so angry that she felt a twinge in her chest.

After seeing this, Dorian quickly stepped in. "Mom, if you're here to enjoy the party, you're welcome.

But if you're here to cause trouble for Vivienne, I'd like you to leave. This is her engagement party, and I don't want it to be ruined."

"Slap!"

Beatrice slapped him angrily as her eyes widened with anger. "You ungrateful son! I'm your mother! I came to my granddaughter's engagement party, and you're trying to kick me out in front of everyone?

You think sucking up to the Ellington family gives you the right? As long as I'm alive, you'll never be the head of the Hawthorn family!"

"You slapped my father-in-law in front of me. Did you forget about me?" Percival's eyes narrowed, and

his voice was icy.

Beatrice flinched, but still said defiantly, "Percival, he might be your father-in-law, but he's also my son.

I'm disciplining my own child. What does it have to do with you?"

She had already apologized to the Ellington family multiple times. She was scared this would ruin the wedding.

Was it wrong for her to criticize Vivienne to save her marriage?

Now Vivienne was ignoring her, Dorian was disrespecting her, and even Percival was embarrassing her in front of everyone. She was so angry that she didn't care about her dignity anymore.

"I don't care about you disciplining your son, but today is my engagement party. You slapped my father-in-law in public, which is an insult to the Ellington family." Percival spoke with his hands in his pockets and his voice calm.

"I..."

Before Beatrice could say anything else, Arabella interrupted. "Percival, I'm sorry. My grandmother was just impulsive and said some harsh words. The party has been delayed for long enough. Let's start now; everyone's been waiting... Percival, your leg? It's healed?"

In the middle of her speech, Arabella noticed Percival's leg and was dumbfounded.

What on earth?

How could Percival stand up?

Beatrice, still fuming, looked over at Percival's leg and was stunned. "Mr. Ellington, your leg is healed?"

Just an hour ago, Percival was in a wheelchair. How did his leg heal so quickly after just stepping out?

When Percival was disabled, Richard pampered him as if he wanted to give him everything the

Ellington family had. If his leg was healed, wouldn't he be even more favored?

Everyone else was also stunned by Percival standing up, unable to say a word.

Percival ignored them, took Vivienne's hand, and walked straight to the head table.

Beatrice, Dorian, and the other direct relatives of the Hawthorn family were seated at the same table as

the Ellington family.

As soon as they walked in, the Ellington family noticed Percival's leg. Cecilia immediately stood up and

looked at him in shock. "Percival, your leg?"

The other members of the Ellington family also looked over. Their expressions were varied, and their

emotions were complex.

Percival glanced at them and said, "Thanks to Vivienne, I met a miracle doctor on the way to find her.

His acupuncture treatment healed my leg."

People were amazed. "Who is that skilled that they can heal a disabled person with just one

acupuncture treatment?"

"Could it be that miracle doctor? I heard that doctor's medical skills are amazing. He can bring people

back from the dead, let alone heal disabilities."

"Percival is so lucky to meet that miracle doctor. I heard that doctor's whereabouts are unpredictable.

Many people have spent a fortune trying to find him but couldn't."

Arabella listened to everyone's discussion as her hands clenched tightly.

She never expected that Percival's leg would be healed, especially at the engagement party.

If Percival's leg was healed, then he would no longer be disabled, and Richard might let him take over

the Ellington family's business.

Given Richard's favoritism towards Percival, he might even make him the successor of the Ellington

family.

She was frustrated. Had she known this, she wouldn't have turned down the marriage proposal. If

Percival became the successor, she would be the real mistress of the Ellington family.

Cecilia was stoked. She held Percival and stared at him for a long time as she sobbed. "Your leg is

healed. It's truly healed. I can finally breathe easy."

With that, something suddenly occurred to her. She turned to Richard and said, "Dad, since Percival's

leg is fine, then about this marriage..."

Cecilia opened her mouth, but Richard shot her a stern look, and she immediately clammed up.

Ignoring her, Richard turned to Dorian and said, "Dorian, we can kick off the engagement ceremony

now."

Dorian nodded. "Richard, you're the elder. It's only fitting that you should steer the ship for the wedding

ceremony."

Richard nodded without any hesitation and then stood up. "Today is the engagement party of my

grandson, Percival, and Vivienne from the Hawthorn family. First off, I wish them a lifetime of

togetherness, a hundred years of bliss, and a life filled with happiness."

After saying that, Richard had the dowry brought up and said to Dorian, "Here's 88 grand. You might wanna give it a count."

The dowry was laid out on a tray and wrapped in silk.

Just as Dorian was about to speak, Beatrice suddenly stood up, looking very agitated. "Only 88,000 for the dowry? How is this possible? We clearly discussed a 10 million dowry. Richard, isn't this a bit of a low blow?"

"Yeah, Vivienne is a daughter of the Hawthorn family. The Hawthorns hold a high social standing in Havenwood. Giving only 88,000 for the dowry is a slap in our face!" Joseph chimed in.

"I think you guys do not genuinely want Vivienne to marry into your family. If that's the case, we're calling off the engagement." Michael also chimed in.

Chapter 79

The Hawthorn clan was all worked up. They had high hopes that Vivienne's dowry would revive their family's fortune. But who could've guessed that the Ellingtons only coughed up a meager 88K? How could they swallow that?

So some relatives started grumbling, "You Ellingtons are such cheapskates! Even if the Hawthorns are just regular folks, 88K as a wedding gift is way too stingy. That's just not on!"

“Did you lower the dowry to 88K just because Percival’s leg is healed? That’s low, even for you. You

were willing to give 10 million when Percival was ill. But now that his leg’s all good, you’ve slashed the dowry. That’s not right!”

Everyone was chiming in, not giving Richard a chance to get a word in edgewise.

Arabella was shocked at the 88K dowry, but secretly, she was thrilled.

So what if Vivienne was a real Hawthorn? To the Ellingtons, she was only worth 88K. novelbin

Now, with Percival’s leg healed, they cared even less about Vivienne. Looked like she still had a shot at winning this match.

“What the heck are you all blabbing about?” Dorian snapped, “I was the one who suggested the 88K dowry. I’m not selling my daughter! 10 million dollars? I don’t need it. I just want my daughter to live happily!”

Beatrice jerked her head up and stared at him in disbelief. “You suggested it?”

“Yes, I did! And I’ll let Vivienne take the entire 88K with her when she gets married.”

Dorian looked serious. “Mom, are you disappointed? Did you expect me to get 10 million and give it to

you? Dream on! Even if there's just a penny left, I won't give it to you."

"You ungrateful child!" Beatrice clutched her chest. "I raised you with my own blood, sweat, and tears,

and this is how you repay me? If I knew you'd be this ungrateful, I should've never had you!"

She had been hoping to get that 10 million to save the Hawthorn family's business.

But now her son had ruined it all. How could she not be furious?

"Dorian, you're way out of line! She is your mother, and Vivienne is her granddaughter. Mom has

always taken care of the family's wedding affairs. Why didn't you consult her on such an important

matter? Do you even consider her our mother?" Michael roared.

"Don't you know the state the Hawthorn family is in? Do you want to see our family's business go

under? Dorian, how could you be so cold-hearted?" Joseph chimed in.

Everyone knew the state the Hawthorn family was in. They just didn't want to air their dirty laundry in

public, especially not in this setting. It would be humiliating to let everyone know that the Hawthorns

were banking on Vivienne's dowry to save their business.

But right now, they couldn't care less.

They had to fight for a bigger dowry.

Even if they couldn't get 10 million, a few hundred thousand or a million would do. At least it'd ease the financial strain on the Hawthorns.

Dorian looked at them coldly. "I really don't get it. Vivienne is my daughter, so why can't I make decisions for her? A grandma demanding her granddaughter's dowry? I bet we're the only ones in Havenwood who would do such a thing!"

"What's wrong with me wanting her dowry?" Beatrice stood her ground. "Vivienne is a Hawthorn; she should follow our tradition. I'm the head of the Hawthorns."

"I've made up my mind about the dowry. Mom, if you have any objections, I can't do anything about it. We've wasted too much time. With all these people watching, if you keep causing a scene, I might have to ask you to leave." Dorian said resolutely.

"Your words don't count!"

Beatrice knew her son had drifted away from her. Arguing with him was pointless. She didn't want to bicker anymore.

So she turned to Richard. "Richard, I make the decisions for the Hawthorns. I decide my

granddaughter's dowry. 10 million dollars. That's what we agreed on. If you shortchange us by a penny, we won't agree to this marriage."

"Unbelievable greed!" Richard hadn't even opened his mouth when Cecilia coldly interjected.

She had always looked down on the Hawthorns. But since Richard insisted on having their son marry Vivienne, she had to suck it up.

But now, Beatrice was going back on an agreed-upon dowry. What was that about?

The Ellingtons could afford 10 million dollars. She just couldn't stand the Hawthorns' greed.

"Cecilia, it ain't like you're saying." Beatrice responded. She didn't even sound mad. "It was your folks

who first came knocking on our door for marriage. At first, I wasn't on board with this match, but

Richard was cool with it. Mr. Ellington and Vivienne were too, so naturally, I had nothing to say.

But when it comes to the dowry, it's always up to the head of the family to decide, right? And Richard

himself mentioned it. As long as we stuck to the marriage agreement, he'd give us ten million bucks.

Now that Mr. Ellington's leg's all healed up, why are you guys backing out?"

Beatrice cared about her dignity, but what was that compared to the family's honor?

She didn't give a damn about what the Ellingtons thought of her, as long as she got the money.

"Who says we're backing out?" Cecilia retorted, her face ashen. "Your son himself suggested an 88k dollar dowry, and we prepared it as requested. Why are you blaming us now? Beatrice, your family does hold some sway in Havenwood, but are you really willing to stoop so low?"

"You guys didn't think this through. I'm still the head of the Hawthorn family, but you went straight to my

son to propose. You think that's right? There's no way we're accepting an 88-thousand-dollar dowry.

Give me a straight answer. Do I take Vivienne back, or do we keep the engagement?"

Before Cecilia could even respond, Beatrice continued, "The Hawthorn family isn't as prestigious as the Ellington family. If the wedding's off, it's gonna be a real bummer for the Hawthorns, not to mention the impact it would have on the Ellingtons."

"You!" Cecilia was now red in the face with anger. She'd never met such a shameless person.

Dorian was dumbfounded by Beatrice's behavior.

He never thought that Beatrice, who valued honor, would act like a hooligan just to get her granddaughter's dowry.

He tried to reason with her and even used harsh words, but Beatrice wouldn't budge. He was at his

wit's end.

Dorian let out a deep sigh and said to Vivienne, "Vivienne, maybe we should call off the wedding? You see, I'm out of options here."

"Call it off? Why?" Vivienne lifted her chin slightly, her face expressionless, as she stared at Beatrice.

"No one but my mom can change a decision I've made."

She walked up to Beatrice as a cold light flashed in her beautiful eyes. "If the dowry was ten million dollars, I would take it. Would you dare accept it, though?"

Chapter 80

"Of course I'd accept it!"

Beatrice was about to respond right away, but upon seeing Vivienne's frosty gaze, she felt as if something had clogged her throat, and she couldn't utter a single word.

"Vivienne! What's all this about?" Joseph angrily questioned her. "She's your grandmother. How could you talk to her like that?"

Vivienne slightly curled her lips, elegantly tucking a loose strand of hair behind her ear before speaking slowly. "Joseph, if we were in a different place, I wouldn't even bother talking to you with this much

patience. Wanna give it a go?"

"You!" Joseph was left fuming and speechless.

That little imp, Vivienne, was yet again using the past to threaten him.

Whether she really had any evidence or not, he couldn't take the risk.

Vivienne glanced indifferently at the Hawthorn family members and spoke in an icy tone, "I, Vivienne, have never acknowledged any connection to you, the Hawthorn family, except for Dorian and Cordelia.

If you don't get it, I don't mind stirring up a buzz around the Hawthorn family again."

Beatrice was taken aback. Vivienne knew too many secrets about the Hawthorns. They couldn't let her blow things out of proportion.

Arabella spoke with a frozen expression. "We're all family. Are you really going to take things this far?

We're your family, and the prosperity of the Hawthorn family is your prosperity. Accepting the dowry would elevate the Hawthorn family. Why are you trying to stop us from accepting it? You're cutting off your own escape route. Do you get that?"

Vivienne smirked. "I don't need to rely on anyone."

She looked at Arabella as if she were looking at a fool.

Given the current state of the Hawthorn family, even if they got a 10-million-dollar investment, it would take decades to catch up with the Ellington family's wealth.

Even if the Hawthorn family was loaded, the Ellington family would still look down on Arabella.

"You dare discuss my family right in my face? Do you think all my family members are dead?" Percival suddenly spoke, his voice as cold as ice.

Arabella involuntarily shivered, but she still held her head high. "Did I say something wrong? We're discussing the dowry you're giving to my sister. The Ellington family is a wealthy family in Rivenwood.

Even if my father asks for \$88,000 as a dowry, do you think it's reasonable?

My grandmother is right too. It was you who proposed to fulfill the marriage contract, and it was you who promised a 10-million-dollar dowry to the Hawthorn family, but now you're backing out. Shouldn't we have the right to speak?"

Arabella didn't want to speak up at this moment because she had previously left a bad impression on Percival. She needed to fix her image.

But 10 million dollars was too important for the Hawthorn family.

She couldn't win Percival's heart for now, nor could she get the 10 million dollars, so she could only hope to get the money through Vivienne.

"Excuse me, who are you?" Percival's eyes flashed as he radiated a chilling aura. "A foster daughter spouting nonsense at the real Hawthorn family daughter's engagement party. Where does your confidence come from?"

Arabella was embarrassed. "Mr. Ellington, your words are very hurtful. I may be a foster daughter of the Hawthorn family, but I see them as my own. Now that the Hawthorn family is damaged, of course I need to speak up. Are you saying that you can do wrong and not allow others to point it out?"

What Arabella hated the most was when people mentioned her status as a foster daughter. She was clearly very outstanding. Why did she have to be ridiculed just because she wasn't born into the Hawthorn family?

"I don't argue with dogs." Percival said expressionlessly.

Arabella was so angry that her face turned purple and her lips began to tremble.

Hearing this, Beatrice changed her expression. "There's no need to release the video."

Things at the banquet had just started to calm down. If the video was exposed again, the Hawthorn

family would become a hot topic again.

Finding an investment was the priority now.

"So, is it okay if the dowry is given to Dorian?" Percival spoke calmly, but his aura was overpowering.

Beatrice was a bit taken aback.

Both Vivienne and Percival were people who wouldn't back down easily.

She understood now that the Ellington family had no intention of giving them the money.

She remained silent for a while and then said, "Vivienne didn't grow up in the Hawthorn family. We

don't have a deep bond. I understand it's reasonable not to give me the dowry. But I'm still her

grandmother, and the decision-making power of this family is still in my hands, so at least some of the

dowry should be given to us."

After finishing, Beatrice looked at Vivienne. "Vivienne, I didn't want to see things turn out this way

today. I have my own dignity. The Hawthorn family really can't hold on any longer. I have to find an

investment. I know you hate me for how I treated your mother back in the day, but I'm still your

grandmother. I hope you can ask the Ellington family for the 10-million-dollar dowry so that your father

won't need to worry about the Hawthorn family's affairs in the future."

Vivienne frowned. Beatrice was really playing dirty to get what she wanted.

She'd even give up her own son for money.

Such a mother was pitiful.

"The marriage dowry is settled. I won't change my mind." Dorian stood in front of Vivienne and said

seriously, "But I'll try my best to find you a 10-million-dollar investment. I hope you can go through the engagement party calmly and stop making a fuss."

"You? I know what you're capable of. You can find a 10-million-dollar investment?" Beatrice sneered.

She really looked down on Dorian. He was weak, soft-hearted, and treated women like treasures.

If he could find a 10-million-dollar investment, why would the Hawthorn family be in this state?

"I have something more valuable than 10 million dollars. The Hawthorn family could use it too." Dorian

said expressionlessly, "Mom, you know what I'm talking about. Today, for Vivienne, I'm willing to give it

up. But after the engagement party, we part ways. What happens to the Hawthorn family in the future is none of my business."

Beatrice was taken aback. She quickly turned to look at Michael and Joseph.

"Fine, it's settled then. You decide on the dowry."

With that, Beatrice sat down and stopped talking.

The rest of the Hawthorn family also quieted down.

Vivienne looked at Dorian as a hint of an unnoticeable light flashed in her eyes.

Was he going to hand over the potion to Beatrice?

"Can we continue the engagement party now?" Richard, who had been silently observing, asked.

Dorian nodded. "I'm sorry you had to see this, Richard. Let's continue."

Richard nodded slightly and had someone bring the 88,000-dollar dowry to Dorian. "The dowry we agreed on before was 88,000 dollars, but after discussing with Percival, we decided to still give a 10-million-dollar dowry for you to handle."

Before anyone could react, Richard continued, "Today, I want to take this opportunity to announce that I

have officially retired. From now on, all affairs of the Ellington family will be handled by my grandson,

Percival. He will be my successor."