

# The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call

Chapter 1671 Living Can Be Far Worse Than Death

Wynter glanced at Whitley and instructed, "Something's not right. Go and stand over there. An auspicious being can suppress evil."

Though Whitley was left speechless by her statement, he complied. True to Wynter's words, nearly half of the morbid energy had been repressed.

Upon noticing Wynter's arrival, Vanessa quickly released Astrid but felt a scorching pain tearing through her soul. The heavens didn't condone a child striking their mother, and now Vanessa was facing the consequences of her action.

Only one formation stood out as the deadliest-the Sacrificial Soul Formation. It appeared someone attempted to use Vanessa's soul to break open the ground and release the creatures within.

Wynter recalled a similar tactic was employed in the past to strengthen one's power. She chided herself for overlooking the possibility.

"I want her dead, Lady Wynter. I want her gone! Why was I born into such a family? Just why?" Vanessa murmured

Wynter stepped closer to observe Vanessa's condition, but her eyes widened in shock. Without hesitation, she grasped Vanessa's spiritual form. The black mist instantly seeped into her fingers-a manifestation of Vanessa's personal burdens.

Wynter turned to Vanessa and said, 'You don't have to take this on yourself. Sometimes, it's worse to be alive than dead. The greatest revenge isn't ending her life, but to let her live in a world she dreads most.'

She then raised a hand and extinguished the flames on Vanessa. "Do you trust me?" she asked. Vanessa realized that Wynter had taken on her personal burden. With reddened eyes, she voiced her trust in Wynter. Of all the gods and mortals, Wynter was the only one who stood up for her.

"And who the hell are you? I'm telling you-stay out of our family matters! You have no right to interfere!" Astrid sneered. While others regarded the cultivators with fear, she remained unshaken.

She stood resolutely by her words. 'How dare that ungrateful girl strangle me? Even if I descend to the underworld, I'll still be justified!'

Hearing that, Wynter showed a smirk. "What makes you think I'm here to reason with you?"

She then took out her phone and dialed a number. "Has the couple involved in the nightclub case returned the stolen money yet?"

"They have moved from their previous address. We're just downstairs at their new location. For some reason, the sky went dark all of a sudden," came the reply on the other end.

Wynter stated calmly, "Perfect. I'm at the scene right now. You can come upstairs."

"What stolen money? That belongs to us!" Krishen took her words in stride.

Wynter glanced over and retorted, "I almost forgot about you, since you've been so quiet earlier. Looking at your grades, it's obvious something's off about your admission to the top school."

"You shamelessly leech off your sister, and now you dream of becoming an influencer? Well, get ready to enjoy the public's scorn for the rest of your life."

Krishen's expression instantly turned sour.

Astrid placed a hand on her waist and pointed at Wynter. "Why do you keep sticking your nose in other people's affairs? Don't you have anyone else to care about? I'd like to see who dares take back the money I got for trading my own daughter!"

Vanessa stood at a side, surrounded by resentful energy. She would be far from calm if Wynter weren't next to her. Perhaps, it was Wynter's presence that kept her earlier aggression restrained. After all, she believed that Wynter would serve her justice.

## **The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call**

Chapter 1672 Built Different

Even Whitley found the situation bizarre.

Logically, a wraith that had transformed into a malevolent spirit would never regain its senses, especially with constant provocations only worsening its condition. Ultimately, it would become an earthbound spirit and affect its surrounding humans' fortune.

Throughout history, an earthbound spirit's emergence tended to disrupt an entire city's fortune. Whitley recalled that people would pray to him to rid their village of such spirits, claiming that they would do anything in return for peace to be restored.

But when Whitley intervened, he discovered it was the villagers' greed that had brought the earthbound spirit into being.

Mortals faced retribution either as divine punishments or constructed disasters in ancient times. And the more earthbound spirits there were, the weaker Gaia's protection over the people became.

While having bad luck at work wasn't a major concern, the city's fortune might be drained once the earthbound spirits established a connection. There had been historical cases where an entire village had vanished overnight because of that.

The rise of a wraithlord often marked a dynasty's fall. If Whitley's assumption was right, it appeared someone attempted to turn Vanessa into a wraithlord. She was nearly on the edge of that transformation, yet Wynter had managed to calm her.

Whitley performed a swift divination. Seeing Wynter resolve the looming chaos without the use of artifacts, she appeared more like a spectral cultivator instead of a legitimate one. However, the heavens surely wouldn't welcome such an individual.

But Wynter couldn't care less about the heavenly law. She stood before Vanessa as black mist coiled around her wrist. In response to Astrid's nonsensical retort, she merely glanced at the clock and muttered, "It's time." As Astrid wondered what she meant, several individuals in uniforms appeared at the door. Holding a document in hand, they greeted Wynter before turning toward Astrid.

"Good day. We're from the City Bureau. In accordance with the law, we're here to seize the illegal funds you've received. Here is a document approved by the court. This house will also be confiscated," the leading law enforcer stated.

Astrid glared at him and retorted, "I agreed to the settlement fee of my own accord. What right do you have to seize it with nothing but that paper? If you're looking for illegal funds, tell that to the one who paid us!"

"They murdered my daughter, and we have nothing to do with it. I'm not handing over a single cent, not even if God himself demands it!"

With that, she plopped down on a stool, looking completely unconcerned.

The law enforcer explained calmly, "If you refuse to cooperate, we have the right to arrest you and your family. You may be detained for lighter charges, or, in severe cases, be imprisoned."

"You'll also be added to the credit blacklist, which will freeze all your bank accounts and payment tools. Since your son is not of legal age, we'll notify the schools, and he'll be barred from admissions."

Astrid remained unfazed and crossed her legs nonchalantly. She believed that the law enforcer was bluffing, but Krishen understood the gravity of the situation.

"We can't end up like that, Mom! I can't let my classmates find out I've been involved in a lawsuit. You know how it is at the top school, Mom. I'll be humiliated! Hurry and return the money!" Krishen urged.

Astrid stiffened at his words. It pained her more to lose her money than her life-she didn't want to give up her money at all!

## The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call

### Chapter 1673 Condemned

But Krishen was her precious son, and everything Astrid did was to secure him a place at the top school Astrid momentarily hesitated before handing over her bank card.

Wynter took the bank card and smirked. "Though both are your children, you care more about your son."

Astrid retorted haughtily, "I've returned the money and admitted my faults. Either we call it even, or you arrest me right here. I never wanted a daughter, anyway."

Wynter looked up, seemingly staring at an empty space. "That's what she said. Did you hear that?"

Although the law enforcers couldn't see Vanessa's soul, they were aware that the Special Unit handled investigations differently.

Vanessa's eyes glistened with newfound light. She had believed she could never sever her ties to Astrid, who had borne the pain of bringing her into this world. Since the day she was born, she had been indebted to Astrid.

But when Astrid personally declared it even, Vanessa was freed from the chains of being her daughter. That meant everything to a restless soul like Vanessa.

"We won't arrest you. You're better off staying outside. Wynter smiled and waved. The scent of the burning talisman wafted through the air.

Whitley witnessed Wynter release Carol and Dora. He knew that a life the twins trailed would soon burn out, especially with the fiery resentment in their eyes.

Wynter's prediction had come to pass. For someone like Astrid, the underworld or a prison cell wouldn't have fazed her. What truly shattered her was the stifling criticisms and the fact that her precious son could no longer attend his dream school.

Astrid thought things had settled after the law enforcers departed. However, Krishen instantly noticed a crowd gathering outside.

"They've tracked our address from the live stream!" he exclaimed.

Astrid had never faced anything like this before. Not only was the crowd outside railing against them, but her family also urged her to calm the public outrage in their group chat.

Her statement in the live stream had led the entire Cortney family to be condemned for their cruelty in selling Vanessa.

"It's all because of you that Allen's wedding has been called off!" Astrid's brother, Mack Cortney, chided. "You can't just blame it on me, Mack." Astrid pouted.

Mack warned, 'Don't you dare tell anyone I'm your brother. You've always been a halfwit. How could you let it slip that you sold your daughter? You moron!"

The call ended with a sharp click.

Astrid had planned to hide away from the trouble at her mother's house, but it wasn't feasible. Before the Chadwicks could resolve the issue, they received a call from the top school.

Krishen answered the call, and his face turned pale. "We've returned the money, so why can't I go to school? Sir, L.'

The voice on the other end cut him off. "We value a student's character more than grades. I'm sorry to say that you're not qualified for admission, Mr. Chadwick.

In the first place, Krishen hadn't followed the proper procedures for transferring schools. Now that the school had learned of his circumstances, they certainly refused to approve his admission

Astrid, who initially dismissed Wynter's warning, now became flustered upon understanding the gravity of the situation. She grabbed the phone and attempted to explain.

"Please hear me out, sir. My son isn't dumb. He's perfectly capable of keeping up with the lessons. Please don't trust the rumors online. What kind of family would sell their daughter?"

"They're all rumors, you say? I was watching the live stream too, madam," the caller, the school's personnel, refuted sharply.

## The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call

### Chapter 1674 Reaping What They Sow

The school personnel continued, "Your son's admission will not be accepted. He's probably not better off having a mother like you, either. And the truth is, he's been capitalizing on his dead sister. All you care about is getting clout. Honestly speaking, no school will accept your son.'

Indeed, no school was willing to take Krishen in. While he had realized his dream of becoming an influencer, he was too terrified to leave the house. His phone was flooded with hateful messages, and his classmates no longer acknowledged him.

Frustrated, he took his anger out on Astrid. 'I can't even go to school now, all thanks to you! Are you happy now?"

Astrid was stunned, never expecting Krishen to lay the blame on her.

The drunken Steve grew irritated as well. "You could've just apologized, yet you were so stubborn! How do we get out of here now?"

"Why can't we? I'll go out for groceries now! Let's see who dares to stop me!" Astrid shot back, lifting her head defiantly.

Krishen was completely exasperated. "We can only stay here for three days at most. I don't want to go back to the county!"

Astrid assured him. "We won't be going back. I'll think of something."

Hearing that, Krishen finally began to calm down. Tired of being cooped up at home, he decided to accompany Astrid for groceries.

Astrid had assumed it was a minor situation, yet they were instantly surrounded as soon as they stepped outside.

In a moment of panic, Krishen pushed Astrid to the front and shouted, "It was all my mom's idea! She was the one who accepted the money! She always said that Vanessa was useless and that she was better off dead! It's all my mom's fault!"

Astrid was utterly dumbfounded. She could even feel the crowd's venomous words splattering across her face. "Do you think you're worthy of being a mother?" someone inquired.

"How does it feel to sell your daughter for money?" another chimed in.

Sometimes, the only way to handle someone's evil was to be more wicked than they were.

Astrid froze in place after being shoved by Krishen. Her hair was disheveled, and her face was smeared with eggs.

Desperate to escape from the mistreatment, she frantically ran back to the house. However, Krishen and Steve turned a blind eye and slammed the door in her face. No matter how much Astrid banged on the door, it refused to budge.

Beyond the crowd, Wynter stood silhouetted by the dusk light. Behind her, Vanessa lingered in her spiritual form.

Wynter slowly shared, "Isn't it a sight to behold? This is merely the beginning of your family's misfortune. I'm rather talented at reading someone's fortune from their appearance. Let me share a few predictions.

"After Krishen gets married, he'll start neglecting his mother. Astrid will live her days in the village's stone house, with her body paralyzed.

"She might get some food if the daughter-in-law feels like it, or else, she'll only receive a beating. This is the price she'll pay for selling her own daughter.'

Looking at Vanessa, Wynter continued, "The same goes for Krishen and Steve-they won't find peace for the rest of their lives."

As tears clouded Vanessa's gaze, Wynter took out a bank card. Though it was typically resistant to flames, it

was quickly reduced to ashes by the hellfire drawn from the talisman.

"The money they got from selling you has been returned. You're free now," Wynter declared.

As soon as she said that, Vanessa was bathed in a radiant glow.

# The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call

Chapter 1675 My Master

Vanessa knew that the laws of the heavens couldn't be defied.

If it hadn't been for Wynter, Astrid and Steve would've moved into the house at the city center with the money from selling her-a place she could've never afforded while alive. Krishen would've been accepted into a top school, rising to success and praised for his brilliance.

Considering Astrid's overbearing character, she would surely oppress her daughter-in-law while doting on her grandsons.

As for Vanessa, she would've been remembered as nothing more than a shameless, greedy girl who sold her body. The Chadwicks were too embarrassed to give her a proper burial, leading her soul to linger around the hotel.

Vanessa could foresee her family thriving off her death, but the future had changed with Wynter's interference. Yet, that intervention came at a cost Wynter had to bear.

As a malevolent spirit, Vanessa could sense the personal burdens weighing on Wynter. She realized that Wynter had borne the price for changing her fate. Tears welled up in her eyes, and her demeanor softened. Understanding her feelings, Wynter ruffled her hair and said, "The underworld guards will be here soon. You've been a kind soul. You'll definitely live well in your next life."

Vanessa recognized the sacrifices Wynter had made to ensure her peaceful departure. She knew better than anyone the dangers of letting such personal burdens fester.

At that moment, the surrounding noises suddenly faded. Vanessa realized that the underworld guards had arrived.

Instead of ascending to the afterlife, she turned to Wynter and smiled. 'I'd like to acknowledge you as my master. I know you possess a Soul Commanding Badge that has yet to awaken, and I'm the perfect soul for it.' With that, Vanessa took a leap and merged with the Soul Commanding Badge. The badge began to quiver under the stir of the wraithlord's soul.

The sky darkened to a bloody red, and Wynter felt the personal burdens weighing on her grow heavier. But instead of sinking into her body, they flowed into the Soul Commanding Badge.



As Whitley watched the scene, he fell into deep thoughts.

"Wake up, my child. It's time to rise. You lazy bum, your peers will be leaving the mountains soon," a gentle and familiar voice called.

It echoed as the Soul Commanding Badge stirred, yet Wynter couldn't place who it was.

"I've told you countless times to meditate with a clear mind, but you're always caught up in your thoughts," the voice continued

Wynter attempted to hold onto the voice, but other voices began to overlap.

"Come on, kid. I caught a wyrm for you. You'll love it."

"She's not interested in those. She only has eyes for handsome men."

The third voice interjected, "Shut up, you two! I'm trying to read her fortune."

"What for? Our mentor has affirmed that she'll elevate her swordsmanship to the divine realm and ascend to the highest level of the Arcane Way!"

"But what about the repression from the heavenly laws?" a ghostly voice asked worriedly.

"Who cares about the heavenly laws? She's got us!"

The young man's cheerful voice felt oddly familiar, though it was fleeting. A heavy sigh was then heard, as if something had happened.

"Remember, my child. The heavenly laws repress," he said.

But she didn't care about the repression from the heavenly laws. She sought definitive clarity, with no shades of gray.

## The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call

### Chapter 1676 Wynter's Past

As solemn chants echoed in the surrounding air, Wynter seemed to have recovered a more detailed memory. She held onto her forehead as the chants in her mind demanded that she abide by the heavenly laws.

Her lips curled into a smirk, and her eyes reddened. "Why should I abide by the heavenly laws? Am I supposed to seek my death just because they told me to? Well, I refuse!"

Though no one else seemed to hear Wynter, Whitley, who stood nearby, couldn't hide the shock on his face. Wynter continued, 'You said she should appreciate her parents for giving her life. And no matter how wretched they may be, they can still dictate her future.

"They've leeches off her and capitalized on her death, yet they get to live in comfort with boundless wealth and flourishing descendants. If this is the heavens' will, then the gods should really open their damn eyes!" The chants faltered at her words, as though a heavy sigh had been released. The Soul Commanding Badge shimmered in a soft, red glow. It had only recovered a third of its original power after Vanessa had acknowledged Wynter as her master.

In truth, legend claimed that the badge retained a sword spirit's energy, who had sacrificed their mortal body for the sake of humanity. Only the spirit's master could bend the Soul Commanding Badge to their will.

Being a mythical beast, Whitley had lost fragments of the past. But before his slumber, he recalled one figure who had sacrificed their mortality to save countless lives during the apocalypse.

Dark clouds loomed ominously above the neighborhood, as if the heavens had unleashed its wrath. Whitley silently moved closer to Wynter, preparing to face the judgment with her.

The crow soared past from afar, as his black feathers fluttered to the ground. He intended to warn Dalton before the sword spirit was reconstructed.

Before the crow could land, he saw Dalton gaze up at the sky from within the building. In an instant, the cloudy sky cleared up.

The crow rolled his eyes, appearing as if something was caught in his throat. When he finally landed, Dalton inquired in a calm voice, 'Have you found them?"

"I can feel your energy there, but the votary never appeared," the crow replied.

Dalton had once possessed many powerful items, some of which belonged to Mt. Dragon. Each item could unleash chaos on the world if it fell into the wrong hands.

During his search, the crow had located three of them. He had dealt with the culprits and handed the manipulated souls over to the underworld guards. However, he failed to find out about Vanessa.

The crow never expected a plain young woman to nearly turn into a wraithlord. If Vanessa had really become one, the scheming cultivator would've wielded an immense surge of power. By then, the entire city's fortune would surely decline.

In that aspect, the crow admitted that he fell short compared to Wynter. After all, she had always been sharp and perspective when it came to such affairs. That said, the fact remained that she had defied the heavenly laws.

Recalling that Wynter had cursed at the heavens, the crow sneaked a glance at Dalton. Sensing his gaze, Dalton cast his eyes downwards and asked, 'Is there something you want to say?'

"Oh, no. Not at all. Since it has come to this, should I grant that girl some merits?" the crow asked tentatively.

Dalton responded with silence. Despite his attractive side profile, he remained aloof and distant as ever. Yet, the crow knew that Dalton had given his consent.

There was an old belief about borrowing fortune to change one's destiny. Vanessa once had her fortune stolen by her family, yet now her soul had merged with the Soul Commanding Badge, which helped obliterate half of Wynter's personal burdens.

It was rare for a wraithlord to repay a kindness. No wonder Wynter could elevate her swordsmanship to the divine realm with a mortal body in the past.

## The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call

### Chapter 1677 His Plan Was Disrupted

Whitley wasn't the only one who had sensed the change in the surrounding energy. Wynter felt it too, though she couldn't care less about the heavens. She was more concerned about Vanessa, who had merged with the Soul Commanding Badge.

"You can't be reborn once you've merged with the badge," Wynter stated.

Vanessa chuckled softly in response. "Then so be it. I'm sure you've recalled certain memories, Master, but that's as far as my power extends.

"Besides, I've thought it through. Rather than be reborn as a human, I'd much prefer to follow you and stand against the injustices in this world."

With that, Vanessa manifested before Wynter. Bearing the marks of merits, she was no longer an ordinary soul. Considering her horoscope even rivaled that of Eliana's, it appeared that she hadn't visited the nightclub by chance.

Looking at the golden-rimmed Soul Commanding Badge, Wynter lifted her gaze and clutched her hand. "Then, I'll do as you wish."

Instead of letting Vanessa endure the torment of the personal burdens alone, Wynter drew the pain into herself.

Vanessa was stunned, and her eyes brimmed with tears as golden rays enveloped her. After acknowledging Wynter as her master, she had glimpsed into Wynter's past and hoped to share her burdens. However, Wynter adamantly refused and bestowed some fortune upon her instead.

A wraithlord never wept, but when they did, their tears could quell any calamities.

The moment Vanessa shed tears, an elderly man-one deeply revered by many-felt a violent thump in his chest. Blood then trickled from his lips.

"What happened? Stop the car right now!" Astor shouted at the driver.

With a solemn gaze, the old man clutched his chest and raised a hand. "There's no need for that. It's just that my illness relapsed. We mustn't be late for the upcoming conference."

Astor was deeply concerned about the old man's condition. He couldn't understand why the old man became so frail after his trip to Hawford.

He assumed that the old man's health was improving upon seeing him constantly move about. Yet, the old man started coughing up blood again.

The old man interjected, "We can't afford any delays in Colifernia. I understand my body better than anyone else. Don't let a word about this get out."

Sensing the resilience in the old man's tone, Astor glanced at the driver, who had remained focused on the road ahead. He then whispered to the old man. 'Promise me you'll get a check-up after the meeting in Colifernia.'

The old man nodded with a kind expression, yet there was an unsettling grimness lingering in his gaze-an incongruity that would go unnoticed by many. Astor assumed that the old man was simply resting, little did he know that the latter was eager to leave Hawford.

The old man had sensed a force fighting against him, considering that a normal cultivator wouldn't have dispelled the Wraithlord Transformation Formation.

He had carefully schemed to drain Hawford's fortune amidst the chaos, yet the incompetent Fopylans failed to divert attention as he had hoped.

With that thought, the old man closed his eyes and concealed his presence from his adversaries.

But he wasn't the only one fleeing Hawford. A few teachers from various schools were desperately seeking to escape the city as well.

The teachers suddenly found themselves under investigation. It was a situation that had never occurred before. To bring them to account, the Ministry of Education itself would also be called into question-the last department anyone expected to be inspected.

After all, many hidden connections could be exposed upon an investigation. Thus, some directors hesitated when Lucas suggested a thorough inspection.

"I don't mind conducting a large-scale search, but I'm worried it might affect the students' academic progress," one stated.

"I agree that the cafeteria has a serious issue, but with final exams approaching, I'm sure the teachers are already feeling anxious. It wouldn't be a good idea, right?" another echoed

## The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call

### Chapter 1678 Smaller Issues Will Lead to Bigger Problems

It appeared they attempted to sway Lucas' resolve. While they had no objections to other affairs, matters related to education were often far more complex. They might not even realize they had given people a free pass.

"They're right, Mr. Keller. This is an exceptional case. If we were to look into the whole province, it would not only distress the students and parents but also undermine the teachers' genuine dedication," a director added.

It didn't take much to see why educational issues were hard to tackle, from the ongoing school bullying to the spread of harmful teaching materials. Someone always had to interfere before a proper investigation could even begin, whether it was the teacher or the educator.

But that official was right about one thing-it could become overwhelming if the investigation went too deep. After all, most teachers genuinely cared about their students. If the situation became more complicated, it could easily backfire.

That was the reason most education-related cases were swept under the rug. Each incident had its primary and secondary causes at play, and it was crucial to address special cases carefully to avoid making the wrong decision.

While the general public might not grasp the situation, Juan knew that the directors weren't without their own agendas. They intended to make things difficult for Lucas.

If Lucas pursued a thorough investigation, he would risk facing censure from the teachers. But if he didn't, the traitors would remain hidden in the shadows.

Juan anxiously clutched the documents in his hands. Meanwhile, two directors were casually blowing on their hot coffee.

"Here's some advice, Mr. Keller. You can't push the investigation too far. Dominic and I have decided to take our time with the inspection once the commotion settled down. It works like magic," one of the directors said. "He's right. We can't rush things. Let's settle the cafeteria issue and respond to the concerned public. As for the rest, they'll probably forget about it in a few days," the other chimed in.

Lucas glared at them, his eyes burning with fury. "They'll forget, you say? How dare you!"

The Kellers seemed to exude an inherent air of intimidation.

When Lucas spoke, several directors were left silenced by his commanding presence. Two of them were so overcome by fear that cold sweats beaded on their foreheads. The three directors who offered their advice now sat in silence, no longer sipping their coffee.

Whenever a similar event happened, it always ended with the public completely forgetting about it. That was the directors' typical approach in the Ministry of Education.

Despite their fear, they had no intention to look into the case. After all, such investigations weren't always easy. It would be utterly embarrassing if the problem lay within the Ministry of Education itself.

Though the directors hadn't committed any outright wrongdoing, their attitude inevitably led to bigger issues. Even the smallest problem, when piled up, could eventually destroy both the people and the country. Lucas narrowed his eyes, recalling Jackson's advice upon his first arrival in Hawford. He hadn't risen to his position to advance further, but certain things must be done, and he was ready to take full responsibility for them.

Just as he was about to stand and call for a thorough investigation, the meeting room's door swung open. "Please wait, Mr. Keller." It was Wynter, who had rushed over from the neighborhood. Black mist shrouded her, though it remained invisible to the others presented.

The black mist was, in fact, a manifestation of personal burdens that had seeped from the partial awakening Soul Commanding Badge. Although Wynter got caught up in Vanessa's affairs, she managed to show up on time.

"It's not that hard to find the problematic teachers," Wynter stated.

# The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call

## Chapter 1679 Jackson's Mysterious Disciple

Hearing Wynter's words, Lucas wasn't the first to react but rather the two directors across the room.

"What's going on? How did you get in here?"

Of course, they recognized Wynter. After all, she had been making waves in Hawford lately. First, she acquired a plot of land with incalculable value, then made tens of billions in the stock market.

Although she was said to be assisting with investigations-allegedly infiltrating certain circles-they still regarded her as an outsider to their system or a businessperson at best.

And now, they were in the middle of discussing matters related to the entire education system. They couldn't believe her audacity to barge in like this.

"Security! Where's the security?"

"How can anyone just walk in here like this? Does she even belong here?"

Just as the two directors stood up and shouted, Lucas spoke with a gentle smile. "Wynter, you've already figured out a solution, haven't you?"

At that moment, everyone suddenly recalled a long-standing rumor-one that no one had ever taken seriously. It was said that Lucas might be the renowned Jackson Munn's disciple. Additionally, in recent years, Jackson had supposedly taken on a new student, rumored to be groomed directly for the military.

But no one had ever seen this so-called disciple. Jackson, a figure of immense contribution to the nation, commanded unparalleled respect in the military. Yet, no one could have imagined that Wynter could possibly be his rumored disciple.

They couldn't believe that Jackson's disciple was a young woman. Who would have thought?

Expressions of shock and disbelief were plastered across everyone's faces. Some even started to show signs of unease.

Jackson... How could they have forgotten? If Lucas was backed by Jackson, then...

"This... This really is... Mr. Keller, this Ms. Quinnell-is she, by any chance, connected to Mr. Munn Senior?" One of them finally summoned the courage to test the waters.

Lucas didn't deny it. 'Mr. Munn Senior has always been quite fond of Wynter. You've heard about her too, haven't you? Then, there's no need for an introduction. In Mr. Munn Senior's eyes, Wynter's capabilities are beyond question-sometimes even surpassing mine.'

Upon hearing this, the expressions of the individuals varied.

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"W-We've only heard about it but never met her. Mis. Quinnell, we didn't mean anything by what we said earlier.'

"Exactly! Education is indeed a serious matter, and it's not suitable for too many people to get involved. But since you're Mr. Munn Senior's disciple, that's a different story. We trust Mr. Munn Senior's judgment, don't we?"

"Of course! Feel free to share with us if you have any suggestions. After all, you're the one who uncovered this case in the first place."

Wynter's gaze darkened as she observed their sudden change in attitude. 'Before I provide any suggestions, I have a few questions for all of you.

"First, why are some students allowed to transfer schools without taking entrance exams? Second, why have certain teachers been employed without any background checks? Third, why were reports about issues in the school cafeteria ignored?

"Finally-and most importantly-why were there numerous cases of parents reporting that they lost contact with their children after they went abroad? Parents even protested at the school, but no results were ever disclosed

"Who among you is going to answer these questions?"

The atmosphere in the room shifted instantly. Those who were pushing for Lucas to take action and make decisions moments ago were now completely silent. Large beads of sweat began to form on some of them. Wynter lifted her gaze and scanned through the room. 'Mr. Stanford, I'm waiting for your answer.

## The Heiress' Return: Six Brothers at Her Beck and Call



## Chapter 1680 Going All Out

Dominic Stanford, who had been rambling earlier about how all the measures were for the students' benefit and to support the teachers, now seemed paralyzed.

Not only did he fail to utter a single word, but beads of sweat were also starting to form on his forehead under Lucas' intense gaze.

He had completely lost the urge to drink the tea he had been sipping so leisurely earlier. In fact, even wiping the sweat from his brows seemed like an act he didn't dare to attempt.

Wynter raised an eyebrow. "Do you have nothing to say, Mr. Stanford? Then, Mr. Hollis should be able to speak on his behalf."

The deputy director, Olivian Hollis, was noticeably calmer. "Indeed, the schools have various problems, and we've been investigating these issues for some time.

"This includes assessing whether certain individuals are suitable for leadership positions in schools. We've tried to make the best choices possible.

"As for the cases of students going missing abroad, those involve far-reaching matters. All these students left through legal channels, and their entry and exit records are documented.

"If a child decides not to return because they find life abroad better, forcing them to come back isn't something we can do. Also, such cases don't strictly fall under our jurisdiction. As for the cafeteria issues, we've addressed them repeatedly."

He turned his gaze to the opposite side of the room, looking at Kaeya Langston, another director. "Mr. Langston can attest to this. We emphasize this issue every time we have meetings with school representatives.

"We've practically hammered it into them. The students' food safety is paramount and non-negotiable. Even if the cafeteria is outsourced, the school must appoint specific personnel to oversee inspections.

"But despite our instructions, the implementation at the lower levels often doesn't reflect our directives."

Kaeya nodded in agreement. "What Mr. Hollis said is accurate. It's not that we haven't taken action—it's just that there are often many challenges when it comes to executing our directives."

When it came to responsibility, it had always been a cycle of shifting blame, with each party deflecting it onto the other. When something went wrong, no one wanted to take the blame. Everything was conveniently attributed to the lower levels.

Their words were just like what the report said, "The issue was caused by the school's lack of oversight, allowing the cafeteria to be outsourced to a disreputable vendor, leading to the current food safety problems."

"You've said so much, but let me sum it up in one sentence." Wynter mimicked his tone. The school's problems have nothing to do with us. It's all their decisions. Any incidents that happen are on the outsourcing. As for us? We're diligent and incorruptible."

Hearing this, Olivian's face flushed red, then turned pale. Though frustrated, he restrained his anger, mindful of Wynter's status.

He could only force a smile. "That's not what I meant. We'll take it if it's our responsibility. It's just that these issues are complex and not so easily resolved. The priority isn't about assigning blame right now but addressing the problem effectively."

"It's good to know you're willing to take responsibility, Mr. Hollis." Wynter finally placed a photo on the table. "Here's a record of the credentials for Mindcrest High School. You signed off on them yourself.

"While the principal may not have had direct contact with you, the now-detained Mr. Nord did, didn't he?"

At this, Olivian's face paled instantly.

Wynter continued calmly, "Of course, Mr. Nord was just the person on the surface. Behind the scenes, the one you were really dealing with was Fredric, wasn't it?"

At Wynter's words, Kaeya raised his head, his expression clearly one of shock. It seemed he truly didn't know about this. "Mr. Hollis, what did you discuss with Mr. Monty?"

After all, the credentials for this area had been under his jurisdiction.

"Just some usual work negotiations..." Olivian's gaze darted everywhere.

Wynter chuckled dryly. "You're truly persistent, Mr. Hollis. You won't give up until the very end, will you? It makes sense though-after all, this project was under your authority from the start. I suppose it could be called 'work negotiations,' indeed."