

Million-Dollar 231

Chapter 231

Just then, four black vehicles appeared ahead, closing in on them in a pincer attack. The two leading cars swerved aggressively, preparing to flank them.

"Can you handle this?" Vivienne asked, her gaze fixed on the two oncoming vehicles. From her tone, it seemed like she was both concerned and challenging him. "If not, let me take the wheel."

Percival twitched his mouth, freeing one hand to pinch Vivienne's delicate cheek. His voice held a hint of playful resentment. "Vivienne! You're not allowed to question my ability again!"

He was a perfectly capable man.

He could handle this.

Vivienne was a bit taken aback by his strong response.

"I've heard about your driving abilities, but I have no proof." She said candidly.

"I am driving, Vivienne. Just sit back and watch." One thing Percival never lacked was confidence.

Vivienne was at a loss.

With a swift turn of the steering wheel and a solid stomp on the clutch, Percival raised half the car's

body in a sudden tilt. Using the same move Vivienne had previously executed in Havenwood, he maneuvered their vehicle through the oncoming cars just in time.

Both Anna and Leopold gasped, gripping their seats tightly as their faces grew a shade paler. Only

Vivienne laughed. "Not bad! You've been learning."

After dodging the attack, the car landed heavily on its tires and sped off.

"Of course. My wife is the best teacher ever." Percival replied with a grin.

Vivienne raised an eyebrow, finding Percival increasingly audacious. Before she could correct his presumptuous term of endearment, the four black cars were already turning around to give chase.

"Persistent bastards." Vivienne muttered under her breath as she turned to Leopold. "Got any weapons?"

"I do." Leopold handed her a silver revolver from his waist.

Vivienne took the gun, lowered the car window, and fired four shots.

With four resounding bangs, each bullet accurately hit the gas tanks of the chasing cars.

In a roaring explosion, the gas tanks burst into flames. The vehicles collided with each other, and the men inside didn't even have a chance to escape before they were consumed by the fiery inferno,

leaving them to die in unbearable agony.

"Way to go, Vivienne!" Leopold cheered. He was excited to see Vivienne in action again after so many years.

His celebration was cut short when he accidentally bumped into Anna's injured arm.

"Ouch!" Anna winced in pain, so Leopold quickly apologized. "Sorry, sorry, I got carried away."

"How's your arm?" Vivienne tossed the gun back to Leopold and reached out to examine Anna's injury.

"It's okay. It's just a scratch." Anna shook her head. "It's not serious."

Vivienne looked at Anna's determined face, noticing the blood on the knife Anna was holding.

That certainly wasn't Anna's own blood.

Vivienne saw a bit of herself in Anna. She was a lone wolf who always downplayed her injuries and

licked her own wounds in solitude, turning herself into a formidable weapon.

"Ms. Vivienne, how did you find me?" Anna asked curiously.

"The enemy sent out a lot of false information. We had to split up and search each location." Vivienne

replied calmly, "We were lucky to find you, and you were lucky we did."

"Why did you come to Rivenwood alone?" Vivienne was slightly annoyed at Anna's recklessness. If

Anna hadn't run off to Rivenwood on her own, she wouldn't have been in danger in the first place.

"I was exposed in that kidnapping incident. If I stayed at Cloudcrest High School, I might have brought danger to the other students."

Anna shook her head as she continued, "Besides, I knew what you wanted from me. I didn't take it to Havenwood. It's hidden in Rivenwood. I haven't been back in a long time, so I thought I'd scout the place out first."

"Did you finish your scouting?" Vivienne raised an eyebrow.

"I did." Anna looked back at her. Her eyes swept over the silent Percival and Leopold in the car, questioning their trustworthiness.

"Should I tell her about your identity, or will you?" Vivienne turned to Percival, who was still driving.

"I'm Wolf." Percival replied in a calm tone while focusing on the road ahead.

"You're Wolf?!" Anna was taken aback. She had heard that the new leader of her mother's former team was code-named Wolf.

"Lark was my mentor." Percival added, making his allegiance clear.

Anna's gaze then shifted to Leopold.

"I'm on your side, too." Leopold said reluctantly, his expression a mix of annoyance and resignation.

"My code name is Husky."

Anna couldn't help but laugh.

"Quite fitting." Vivienne nodded seriously. Considering Leopold's chatty and goofy nature, there was no code name more suited to him than "Husky."

"Vivienne!" Leopold protested, feeling even more wronged. How could a handsome and charming gentleman like him be called Husky?!

It was all Percival's fault.

Of course, their code names were decided by drawing lots. Everyone else had drawn cool or intimidating code names like "Silver Fox," "Hawk," or "Viper." But when it was his turn, he got "Husky."

He was furious at the time. Who on earth had snuck such a ridiculous code name into the lottery? And how unlucky was he to draw it?!

After being teased by his teammates for three days and nights because of his code name, he found out

that Percival had played a trick on him. When it was his turn to draw, Percival had replaced all the lots in the box with "Husky." No matter what he drew, it was destined for that to be his code name.

What's worse, Percival had already reported their code names that day, leaving him no chance to change it.

From that point on, his code name became the butt of all jokes at the station.

Merely thinking about it made him want to give Percival a taste of the revolver in his hand.

Percival seemed completely unbothered by the murderous aura emanating from the backseat, courtesy of Leopold's glare.

"Since you are injured, let's head back to my place first to treat your wound." Percival simply told Anna.

"No." Anna shook her head. "We should go and get the thing directly. I fear delays might complicate things."

"Fair enough." Percival lightly tapped the steering wheel with his fingers, suddenly furrowing his brows.

A flicker of annoyance crossed his face, and his previously relaxed fingers tightened around the wheel.

Vivienne also stared coldly at the endless stretch of woodland by the roadside.

From the left side of the woods, the roar of motorcycle engines was deafeningly close, causing a sense

of irritation. A group of motocross bikes in all sorts of colors burst out from the woods, circling their car.

The bikers brandished crude iron rods and baseball bats, relentlessly striking at the windows of the car.

Chapter 232

Vivienne and her gang coldly watched as white marks that were punched into their car windows by the pursuing killers.

After getting shot in Havenwood last time, Percival had all their cars bulletproofed, even the tires, so they didn't worry much about the thugs breaking the windows.

But there were just too many bikers. No matter how Percival swerved and dodged, he would knock down one man only to have several more take his place.

Some bikers, even after being knocked down, would intentionally slide their motorcycles under the car.

If it weren't for Percival's skills, they might have crashed.

After a stretch of road, to the right of the highway was a steep drop, with train tracks below. A wrong move could send them tumbling down onto the tracks.

Ahead, just like before, the bikers had blocked the road with a semi-truck.

The road was too narrow this time. The semi-truck alone was enough to block their way, and the

wreckage of the cars they had blown up earlier left them no room to retreat.

In a fair fight with no constraints, Vivienne could take them all out.

But here, they were limited by the area and just had to find a way to escape.

Suddenly!

Vivienne's ears perked up as she looked towards the tracks.

The distant sound of a train horn was growing louder. A freight train, with its lights blazing and horn blaring, was coming from afar.

"Mr. Wolf, want to take a gamble?" Vivienne asked Percival, pointing at the train.

"Sure!" Percival immediately understood her intent. With a twist of the wheel, their car flew off the cliff and towards the train below.

"Ah!" Leopold screamed and clutched Anna in despair. "Why didn't you ask if I was okay with this?!"

"Shut up, Husky!" Anna snapped. Her ears were aching from his loud cowardice.

It was a risky move. If Percival miscalculated, they might crash directly into the train or even fly over it and plunge off the cliff on the other side.

But there were no ifs.

With a loud thud, their car landed on top of the train.

The bikers were stunned.

But they quickly reacted and followed Percival's car down onto the tracks.

Some crashed into the train and were ground to a pulp by the spinning wheels, while others flew over the top and fell from the cliff on the other side.

But there were still a dozen or so who managed to land on the train.

They dismounted their bikes with weapons in hand and advanced towards Vivienne's group.

Vivienne and the others stepped out of the car to face the bikers.

The train roared on as the cold wind howled behind them, whipping their clothes and tousling their hair.

In the vast night sky, the lonely moon hung high. Its cold light cast long shadows on them.

The bikers attacked first, rushing at them with their weapons.

Vivienne and her crew fought back.

One of them swung his bat at Vivienne's head. They were all dressed in tight leather jackets and pants,

and their helmets made Vivienne's needles useless.

She ducked and, with a swift kick, sent him sprawling off the train.

Two more tried to attack her while she was still on the ground, but she nimbly flipped over them, using their backs as a springboard to kick them off the train as well.

Her ruthlessness stunned the others, making her the target of their attacks.

With multiple attackers, Vivienne could only focus on those in front of her, leaving her back exposed to others.

But when she sensed someone sneaking up behind her, she dodged, accidentally falling off the edge of the train.

"Vivienne!"

Percival's pupils contracted. He kicked away the biker in front of him and rushed over to grab

Vivienne's hand.

Vivienne clung to Percival's arm, hanging off the side of the train. Below her, the train wheels spun rapidly as the sound of metal grinding against metal filled the air.

In order to save her, Percival left his back open. Three bikers swung their baseball bats at him.

Percival grunted in pain and fell to one knee on the metal roof, but he quickly straightened up as his

hand still gripped Vivienne's tightly.

Vivienne's eyes hardened. With a push off the side of the train, she swung back up onto the roof, knocking down the three bikers who had attacked Percival.

The train continued to barrel through the night, the conductor oblivious to the fierce fight happening on the roof of his train.

A tunnel loomed ahead, and the train entered it at high speed.

Percival glanced at the tunnel and whistled a special signal.

At the same time, Vivienne, Anna, and Leopold all dropped down in unison.

They all understood. It was the Vanguard Agency's code for "get down."

Leopold didn't need to be told, and Vivienne and Anna had both learned the signal from their mother.

The remaining bikers stood there, stunned by their sudden move. Before they could react, the train they were on entered the tunnel.

In the darkness of the tunnel, there was a moment of silence, followed by the sound of bones brutally breaking and bodies heavily hitting the metal roof of the train.

Then all was quiet again. Only the cold wind carrying the scent of blood to Vivienne and her group remained.

With a long blast of the horn, the train emerged from the tunnel. The lonely moon looked down from the sky as its cold light illuminated the decapitated bodies on the roof.

Several helmeted heads were scattered about the metal roof of the train. One happened to roll in front of Leopold, startling him. He leaped to his feet, sending the head flying with a swift kick. "Damn! That's even more gruesome than 'Final Destination.' This is sickening!"

He wiped his cheek, which was moist from the blood splatters of the decapitated bikers in the tunnel.

The sight made his stomach churn. "I think I'm gonna hurl..."

And true to his word, he began to retch over the side of the train.

Anna, after standing up, also felt physiological discomfort from the blood stains on her clothes. Yet

Vivienne and Percival seemed unfazed, especially Vivienne. She had a medical background.

Back at Elite University, she was known for her ability to multitask. She would dissect cadavers while watching 'The Little Mermaid' and eating takeout. It was one of the three legendary tales of Elite

University.

Not to mention, she had witnessed Brody, the maniac, create a scene straight out of 'Resident Evil' in the maximum-security prison.

These things did not matter to her; she was more concerned about Percival's injury.

"Mr. Wolf, how's your back injury?"

Chapter 233

Percival had just endured a few hard hits, and he feared he had broken some ribs.

"No big deal." He scoffed, dismissing the minor injuries as if they were nothing.

With a look of disdain, he glanced at Leopold, who had turned pale from vomiting. "You're a disgrace."

The two girls hadn't vomited, yet he, a grown man, was retching uncontrollably.

Once Leopold had finished vomiting, he looked back at Percival and the others, who were unfazed by the bloody scene. "Are you three freaking insane? How can you stand this?"

The train shuddered, causing the headless bodies to sway and fall. The dull thud of bodies hitting the metal floor echoed through the train. Seeing this out of the corner of his eye, Leopold couldn't help but vomit again. "Ugh..."

Percival and Vivienne fell silent.

Percival originally planned to ask Leopold to call someone to clean up this mess to avoid causing a social uproar when it was exposed.

But Leopold's useless state left Percival somewhat exasperated.

Massaging his temples, he finally pulled out his cell phone and called Thomas, who was following other leads. However, he noticed several missed calls from Thomas.

"Percival! Have you found them yet?" Thomas asked anxiously as soon as he got through to Percival, who had been out of touch for nearly two hours.

Then he asked, "What happened?"

"Just a minor issue. It's been resolved." Percival replied as he looked at the bloody mess on top of the train with a stoic expression. "Arrange for a clean-up crew to come over here."

"Alright. I'll locate your position right away." When Thomas was about to hang up, he heard Leopold's retching in the background. "What's wrong with Leopold? Food poisoning?"

"Yep. He ate too much crap." Percival casually slandered Leopold.

Thomas was a bit shocked.

Leopold had this kind of hobby?

Eating crap?

What did crap taste like?

He couldn't think about it.

Thinking about it made him want to vomit.

Thomas ended the call and went back to work.

When Thomas, armed with a warrant, halted the train and climbed onto the roof with his team, he

understood why Leopold had been vomiting so violently. Several of his men couldn't help but run off to

one side to vomit too.

After noticing that their boss and the two girls remained eerily calm, they all realized how absolutely

twisted these three were.

Even Thomas felt like vomiting, but in order to not be called a crap eater like Leopold, he forced himself

to hold it in. Then he gave Leopold, who was on the verge of fainting but couldn't stop vomiting, a

sympathetic look.

Poor guy!

Who knew if this wild night would leave any psychological scars?

After handing over the clean-up process to Thomas, Percival and Vivienne left with Anna in the new vehicle Thomas had arranged for them.

Since Leopold was "wounded" and unable to continue, only the three of them went to retrieve the item at the location Anna had mentioned.

On the way, Vivienne looked at Anna, who was examining the wound on her arm.

Vivienne had been observing Anna since she first appeared in her line of sight, and each time, Anna had displayed extraordinary abilities.

It seemed like Anna deliberately displayed her abilities for Vivienne to see.

Vivienne's lips curled into a slight smile as she leaned back on her leather seat, tapping her fingers against the car window. "Now, you can tell us your story in detail. Was the potion in your hand given to you by your mother?"

Her tone was unhurried, revealing no hint of her emotions.

Since Anna had said she knew what Vivienne wanted, there was no need to beat around the bush.

"Yes." Anna paused her movements. "Although the mission failed all those years ago, team leader

Lark, your mother, saved my mother's life. She gave one of the potions to my mother, who handed it to me before she passed away."

Before Vivienne could ask another question, Anna shook her head and continued, "I know what you want to ask. My mother was unclear about the cause of the mission's failure. She dwelt on it until her death, so I guess you could say she died with a heavy heart."

Both Vivienne and Percival fell silent.

The failure of Lark's last mission, which led to the near annihilation of the team, had always been a shadow in their hearts. Despite years of investigation, the cause of the failure remained a mystery.

They wondered when the truth would finally see the light of day.

...

In the suburbs of Rivenwood.

The former site of the YQ Research Center.

When Anna led Vivienne and Percival through the rusty iron gate of the research center, they startled a few stray cats. The cats, their eyes glowing in the darkness, watched the intruders for a moment before

leaping onto the walls to observe them from above.

"Here?" Percival raised an eyebrow at the long-abandoned research center.

"My mother built this research center from scratch." Vivienne looked at the overgrown courtyard as mixed emotions began to fill her heart.

In its heyday, the YQ Research Center produced medical patents that shocked the entire world.

"You hid it here?" Percival frowned as he followed Anna into the dark building. "My team has searched this place several times."

"I know." Anna turned on the light, revealing that the power in the long-abandoned building was still working. "I watched when you took away Lark's research materials."

Vivienne shot Percival a sidelong glance.

"Your mother was a visionary." Percival explained to her. "She had many grand ideas that she didn't have the chance to implement. Her last unfinished project was something I thought was a pity to leave incomplete, so I took her research materials and had someone continue her unfinished work."

Vivienne nodded. She was already aware of the research Percival was referring to. Her mother had

mentioned the project to her just before she died.

Her mother always dreamed of a breakthrough in her research, hoping for a future that, unfortunately, she never got to see herself.

"Indeed. If her research were to succeed, it would revolutionize the entire course of medical history."

Vivienne stared at the abandoned lab in front of her as a glimmer of determination seeped into her icy gaze.

She was determined to carry forward whatever her mother couldn't accomplish.

Anna waved at Vivienne and Percival, leading them towards the basement.

"Follow me."

Just as Vivienne and Percival began to follow, a grumpy old man in a white tank top and boxer shorts suddenly emerged from a corner.

Clearly, they had disturbed his nap.

"Hey, hey, hey! What are you folks doing here in the middle of the night? You're not here to steal scrap metal, are you?!"

He glared menacingly at the trio, then his gaze finally landed on Anna. "You again, you little

troublemaker!"

"I'm here to get something." Anna tossed a pack of cigarettes to the old man, flashing him a casual grin.

After turning to Vivienne and Percival, she explained, "This gentleman is the security guard hired by the owner of this lab."

Security guard?

Vivienne crossed her arms, squinting at the gruff old man before her, feeling somewhat strange.

Chapter 234

"What?" The old man grumbled as he took the pack of cigarettes Anna tossed to him, skillfully slipping it into his jeans pocket. "People are always rummaging around here, as if there's something worth finding among all this junk. It's truly preposterous."

"Has anyone else been here recently?" Anna asked, her face showing signs of concern.

"Yeah. Some weirdos in black suits were here a few days ago and were tossing things around. I asked them who they were and got nothing but bad attitude in return." The old man retorted, clearly irked by the disrespect he was given by those men.

"You're okay, right?" Anna asked, her anxiety mounting.

"I'm fine. I threatened to call the cops, and they ran off." The old man puffed out his chest with pride.

Anna let out a sigh of relief. She and her friends, Percival and Vivienne, exchanged looks.

"Let's get what we came for." Anna led the way to the basement.

Percival and Vivienne followed. As Vivienne looked back, she locked eyes with the old man, who

snorted before walking away with his head held high, making Vivienne frown.

...

Inside the basement.

This used to be Karen's main lab. Upon entering, Vivienne noticed an abandoned 3D bio-printer.

She blinked in surprise, while Percival looked around the lab as a softness crept onto his normally stern face.

When he first visited this lab, he was just a child. At that time, he was completely awestruck by the wonders inside.

Later, when he understood that many of the beneficial medical advancements in the world came from here, he felt a swell of pride for his mentor.

Unfortunately, the visionary behind all this was no longer with them.

Anna, oblivious to their thoughts, headed straight to a hole in the corner. It was the entrance to a rat's nest.

She bent down and gently tapped on the entrance.

Two small, white heads popped out. They were lab rats.

Recognizing Anna, they squeaked and retreated back into their hole, only to return shortly with a small glass vial filled with a green liquid.

"Did you train these rats?" Vivienne asked as Anna picked up the vial and rewarded the rats with some cookies and candy.

Anna bought the cookies and candy from a 24-hour convenience store earlier, along with the cigarettes for the old man.

Vivienne thought Anna was hungry, not realizing it was for the rats.

"No. They're probably descendants of the lab rats used here before." Anna replied while shaking her head.

"When I first came here, they were bold enough to ask for food. I found them to be quite intelligent and unafraid of me, so I decided to hide the drug here."

Who would have thought she'd hide something so important in a random rat hole?

"Here you go." Anna handed the potion to Vivienne.

Vivienne accepted it without a word.

"Let's get going." Percival suggested.

Anna patted the rats, which were still squeaking around her feet, and followed Vivienne and Percival out of the basement.

When they emerged, the old man was gone.

"Goodbye!" Anna called out to the empty air.

"Hmph," came a response from a hidden corner.

As Percival drove them away, he asked Anna, "What are your plans?"

"I haven't thought about it." Anna was still in a slightly dazed state. For years, she had been running and hiding, fearful of being discovered by GTO members.

"You're exposed now." Percival pointed out calmly. "You have two choices. You can come with me and

work for me, or you can go with Vivienne, who can also protect you."

Anna stayed silent.

"Take your time." Percival said as he drove. "You still need to go to university. But don't do anything

reckless again. We might not always be there to help."

"I understand." Anna replied.

As they reached the city, the sunlight was beginning to peak through the clouds.

Percival glanced at the time. It was 6:15 a.m., so peak morning traffic was about to begin.

"Let's go to my place." Percival suggested to Vivienne. "My grandfather wants to meet you."

"Sure." Vivienne agreed. She sent a text to Draven, asking him to bring the gifts she had prepared for

the Ellington family.

As soon as she hit 'send,' Percival slammed on the brakes, causing the car to lurch.

She steadied herself by pressing her foot against the seat.

After looking up, she saw seven or eight cars surrounding them.

They were in Rivenwood now. Could GTO be bold enough to confront them in broad daylight?

Her face hardened, but as she looked at the man stepping out of one of the cars, her expression changed.

Scott!?

Percival got out of the car, not letting his disheveled appearance reduce his aura of aristocratic coldness.

He stood in front of Scott as his gaze swept over the cars surrounding them. His tone was cold and challenging as he asked, "Scott, what is the meaning of this?"

"Percival, I mean no harm. I'm here to take Vivienne home." Scott's gaze moved past Percival to where Vivienne sat in the car.

The young girl's gaze was sprinkled with a nonchalant air. She lazily locked eyes with him, not shying away. She even radiated subtle mockery at him.

He knew why Vivienne was mocking him.

She was poking fun at how they had been played by Beatrice and Arabella, bringing home a counterfeit treasure and causing chaos in their household.

She was mocking him for not being able to recognize his own daughter.

But who said he couldn't recognize her?

From the moment he laid eyes on Vivienne at the family reunion banquet, he had suspicions. The girl was too much like Karen, except that Karen always exuded a warm aura, while Vivienne was extremely cold. It was so cold that it was hard to get close.

But this coldness might just be because of the hardships she endured in her early years, causing her to armor herself with coldness to keep everyone at bay.

Thinking of this, guilt flooded Scott's heart. He turned to Percival and loudly proclaimed, "Vivienne is my biological daughter."

Chapter 235

Vivienne, seated in the car, heard what Scott said. Her almond-shaped eyebrows raised slightly as her lips curled into a smile. However, there was still a hint of mockery lurking within her smile.

She lounged against the car door with her eyes riveted on Scott, yet remained silent.

"Scott." Percival rolled up his sleeves, a bit uncomfortable with the heat. His movements were slow and deliberate, and his tone was subtly mocking. "Are you sure you haven't made another mistake this time?"

"I had the paternity test done. I supervised the whole process until the results came out. There's no mistake this time." Scott stated with utter sincerity.

When the rush paternity test report came out, his suspicions were confirmed. He was overjoyed and immediately went to Dorian's place.

However, he found out that Vivienne had already left for Rivenwood. So he rushed to Rivenwood.

In Rivenwood, he searched for Vivienne for two days. Considering that Vivienne was Percival's fiancée, he even visited the Ellington family, but found neither Vivienne nor Percival.

Then, someone reported that they saw Percival's car returning from the suburbs to the city. He immediately intercepted them.

In his excitement, he caused quite a scene. Only when he noticed the curious glances of passersby did he realize his overreaction.

"If you don't trust me, you can have Vivienne accompany me to the Ellington family's medical facility for another paternity test." Scott's voice was filled with joy. It was as if he had regained something precious. "Percival, I want to take Vivienne home. Everyone is waiting for her."

"Whether or not she returns to your family isn't up to you or me." Percival glanced at the impassive

Vivienne and said indifferently, "It's up to Vivienne."

"Vivienne." Scott called her name again, his voice filled with relief and excitement. "I am your father. I'm here to take you home."

Vivienne opened the car door and silently stepped out with her hands tucked in her pockets and her gaze fixed on Scott.

Now that Vivienne was finally out of the car, Scott let out a sigh of relief. His eyes were brimming with tears. "I know you're angry because I mistook someone else for you before. But, in fact, I've always been suspicious of Arabella's identity. But Beatrice switched the DNA samples for the paternity tests, and that's why we couldn't find out the truth.

You know, I have been looking for you and your mother for years. I searched everywhere for you. Now, I've finally found you, but your mother has already..."

His voice trailed off, and he let out a long sigh.

Vivienne listened to him with a completely expressionless face. After Scott finished, she asked casually, "Have you been to the Jade Garden Residences?"

"Yes, I have." Scott immediately understood Vivienne's meaning and nodded. "Don't worry, I've expressed my gratitude to your adoptive parents."

Speaking of which, when he met Dorian, he was a bit envious.

He immaturely scrutinized Dorian from head to toe and from toe to head, comparing him with himself several times.

Karen suddenly ran away from their wedding, only to marry Dorian. This fact was a thorn in his side.

He didn't understand what he did wrong or why Dorian was better than him, to the point that Karen chose him to spend her life with.

What irritated him more was that Dorian was so useless that he allowed Beatrice to drive Karen and Vivienne out of their house, leaving them wandering for ten years.

But now that Karen was gone, there was no point dwelling on the past.

Although Dorian didn't do a good job, he did provide shelter for Karen and Vivienne. So, Scott expressed his sincere gratitude to him.

Vivienne looked at Scott as her cold eyes took him in.

As the head of the Brooks family and the Hawthorn clan and a veteran of the business world, he

exuded an undeniable aura. The sharpness in his eyes added a layer of toughness to his demeanor.

He took excellent care of himself. He was nearly fifty, but his face showed no signs of aging.

Vivienne smirked mockingly. She and her mother had been wandering, while her father, the passionate

man in the eyes of others, still took care of himself every day.

He claimed to have loved her mother, but how much did he love her?

Only he would know.

Vivienne withdrew her gaze and said nonchalantly, "Let's go back then."

She had to return to the Brooks family.

Even if Scott hadn't come to find her, she would have gone to them with the paternity test.

She had to know the truth about what happened years ago.

She didn't believe that her strong mother would commit suicide for no reason.

She and her mother were chased for so long, but her mother always managed to avoid or dispel

danger, leaving them safe each time they successfully escaped together. But after receiving a phone

call, she committed suicide by poisoning.

Her mother loved her so much, so how could she abandon her?

Her mother's death might be related to GTO, but GTO had chased her mother for many years and still

couldn't kill her. So, she didn't believe that this was only GTO's doing.

She had checked the Hawthorn family, and everything seemed normal.

Only the Brooks family was left. She would find out whether they were friends or foes.

"Okay, let's go..." Scott was taken aback and didn't respond immediately. "Go where?"

Vivienne raised an eyebrow as a mocking smile played on her lips. "What? Mr. Brooks, you're not

planning to take me back to your family? Or do you think that I, your biological daughter, am not worthy

enough to step into your mansion?"

"No, no, that's not what I meant." Scott panicked immediately. "What I mean is... are you willing to

return to the Brooks family with me?"

For some reason, every time he met Vivienne's eyes, he felt a sense of pressure.

Though she was but a girl of nineteen, she had a way of making others feel an inexplicable pressure.

"Or what?" Vivienne looked at him, her face void of any expression.

"Alright, alright." Scott was elated and ready to escort Vivienne to his car.

"Vivienne." Percival, obviously feeling left out, complained. "My back is killing me."

Vivienne was taken aback. She had asked him twice before, and he had always said he was fine.

"I think I've broken a rib." Percival covered his left side with a look of weakness. "I need you to check it for me."

So, Vivienne turned to Scott, and Percival too, looked at the man who was soon to be his father-in-law.

Scott frowned slightly. He had, of course, done his research on Vivienne. He also heard from Dorian that Vivienne's engagement to Percival was arranged by Karen years ago.

He wasn't like others who simply saw Percival as a spoiled brat who got by on Richard's favoritism.

He knew Karen and understood that her choice of Percival as Vivienne's future husband must have had a deeper meaning.

However, as a future father-in-law scrutinizing his daughter's suitor, it was natural for him to find faults.

Especially when his daughter hadn't even been officially welcomed into the family and she was already being touched by someone else.

His distaste was evident in his eyes, no matter how he tried to hide it.

In the end, he nodded and said, "Then Percival, come back with Vivienne."

Chapter 236

Percival instantly stiffened up and swept away his previous frail look. He took the initiative to take

Vivienne's hand and climb into Scott's car.

Before leaving, he didn't forget to instruct the abandoned Leopold on what to do. "Settle Anna in, and

watch out for the GTO gang."

Leopold glanced at Anna and nodded.

Anna exchanged a look with Vivienne, not saying much.

After Vivienne and Percival climbed into Scott's car, she jokingly asked Percival, "Your back's not

hurting anymore?"

Percival immediately bent slightly. He plastered a fragile look on his face as he clutched his left rib,

leaning against the car seat without a word. His eyes were filled with a hint of watery grievance as he

looked at Vivienne. His gaze was so tender that it could melt hearts.

Vivienne felt goosebumps all over. She thought that if it weren't for Scott sitting next to them, watching

them like a hawk, Percival might have even collapsed into her arms while acting all coquettish.

Vivienne couldn't help but shudder as she imagined that unbearable scene.

Sitting next to Vivienne, Scott had been observing the interactions between the young couple. Seeing

Percival's coquettish look towards Vivienne made him snort in his heart, thinking it was all pretense and a ploy to woo his daughter.

Although Karen had chosen Percival, she had passed away ten years ago. The Percival of ten years ago was a gentle and refined youth, and Scott had thought him suitable then.

He had wished, if he ever had a daughter, to marry her to Percival.

It was more than a decade later now, and people were prone to change. Percival was obviously no longer his young self. So, for Vivienne's future happiness, he needed to scrutinize Percival thoroughly.

This was also why he readily agreed to let Percival return with Vivienne to the Brooks family. It was easier to observe him if he was under his watch.

Brooks Mansion.

Ashley sat thoughtfully on the garden swing, swinging back and forth with a frown on her face.

After returning from Havenwood this time, she returned to the Brooks family with her mother, Melissa.

Her college entrance exam results were very good. They were good enough for her to enter Elite

University. But the Brooks family intended to send her abroad to study, so they asked her to return to discuss it.

As she was debating between going abroad or entering Elite University, she heard the sound of a car horn outside the gate of the mansion.

The electric gate of the mansion immediately opened wide, and a black stretch limousine, escorted by two other cars, drove in.

Ashley hopped off the swing out of curiosity, wondering when her uncle had taken a liking to such grandeur.

She saw the back door of the limousine open, and a pair of long legs stepped out first. The tall figure of the man made Ashley pause.

He was casually dressed today; even his hair wasn't particularly styled, but he still exuded an air of elegance. The morning sun dyed his messy hair golden and softened his usually cold, narrow eyes.

He stood by the car door and bent slightly, reaching out to help a tall girl out of the back seat.

This was the third time Ashley had seen this beautiful girl. She was dressed as casually as when she went to Mila's piano concert. She was wearing a white t-shirt, jeans, and sneakers.

On closer inspection, her clothes were even a bit dirty.

Yet standing next to the man under the sunlight, there was an indescribable sense of compatibility and match.

Scott was the last one to get out of the car. He glanced at Percival with some displeasure and then looked at Vivienne with a touch of regret.

He had wanted to open the door for his daughter and help her out of the car himself, but the clueless Percival had beaten him to it.

"Uncle." Ashley greeted him with a smile on her face as she quickly walked up to them. She reached out warmly towards Vivienne. "Cousin, you're finally back. Uncle's been searching for you for days."

"Hello." Vivienne replied hesitantly as she reached out her hand. She intended to just shake hands and let go, but Ashley grabbed her hand and pulled her towards the main house, leaving Percival behind.

"Come on, let's go meet Grandma."

Percival glanced at Scott, waiting for him to take the lead before following at the end out of politeness.

As Vivienne followed Ashley to the main house, she took in the sights of the Brooks Mansion.

The Brooks family was an old family with a history spanning a century, and the history of Brooks

Mansion could be traced back to a century ago. After being built by the Brooks family's patriarch, it had been refurbished by several generations, blending traces of the old era with the new, creating a unique and alluring charm.

There was a time when the Brooks family had fallen out of the Four Prominent Families of Rivenwood.

They were even facing financial ruin and the potential auction of Brooks Mansion to pay off debts.

It was rumored that they received help from a mysterious power, allowing the Brooks family to rise again and re-enter the Four Prominent Families of Rivenwood, even surpassing other families to take second place.

No sooner had they entered the hall when Judith, who had just received the news, came downstairs, aided by Melissa. Spotting Vivienne, her face lit up with a smile. "Vivienne, who would have thought that you were my granddaughter?"

After taking a few steps forward, she gently took Vivienne's hand from Ashley, holding it tightly with a soft laugh, though her eyes shimmered with tears. "I always knew we had a connection. You even saved me once."

After looking at Vivienne with hopeful eyes, it was clear she wanted Vivienne to call her grandma.

But Vivienne merely glanced at her. Her expression was indifferent as she said, "Mrs. Brooks."

Not everyone deserved to be called 'grandma' by her.

So, what if she was her biological grandmother?

If it were found that Judith had wronged her mother in the past, being related by blood wouldn't save her.

"It's alright. We'll take it slow." Judith's face fell slightly.

However, she had seen the information Scott had gathered about Vivienne. She knew how Beatrice had mistreated Vivienne when she was a child, so she was understanding.

"Oh, brother, have you recognized an impolite daughter again?" A sharp voice echoed from upstairs.

"Did your mother not teach you manners? Can't you even say the word grandma?"

Vivienne's gaze hardened as her eyes narrowed slightly. Looking up, she saw a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a beige linen suit, slowly descending the stairs while scrutinizing Vivienne with a critical eye.

She stood next to Judith as her almond eyes scanned Vivienne up and down before she snorted in contempt. "Brother, your daughter is truly rude. How did Karen raise her? It's one thing to come for a visit dressed like this, but her clothes are so dirty!"

"Paula!" Judith's face turned stern. "This is your own niece. Watch your language!"

"Vivienne is my daughter." Scott added coldly while looking at Paula Brooks. "She's not here for a visit.

She's a part of this family and the owner of this house. She can wear whatever she wants in her own home without the need for propriety."

Chapter 237

Percival's countenance cooled. He stepped forward to stand protectively beside Vivienne, his gaze hardening as he turned to Paula. His presence radiated an icy threat.

"Scott." Percival's voice cut through the tension. "It seems the Brooks family isn't too thrilled about Vivienne's return."

Paula was well aware of who Percival was, but his engagement to Vivienne was a secret kept within the confines of Havenwood, and so their relationship was not well known in Rivenwood.

"Percival, since when do the Ellingtons meddle in our family matters? Have you taken a shine to this little minx?" Paula's eyes switched between Vivienne and Percival as a cold smirk appeared on her

lips. "Look at you, barely out of pigtails and already leading men on. Quite the precocious one, aren't you?"

"Paula!" Judith's stern rebuke echoed. "Watch your tongue! Mr. Ellington is Vivienne's betrothed!"

Paula's expression wavered. Bitterness began lacing her words as she shot a glance at Scott. "Your daughter sure is lucky. She reeled in such a catch."

"That's enough!" Scott's patience had worn thin. "If you have a problem with me, then take it up with me. Leave Vivienne out of it!"

"Oh, haven't you heard of the phrase, 'the sins of the father fall upon the child'?" Paula retorted. "Your daughter returns to a life of comfort and an engaged man, while my own has been missing for fourteen years! Why does your daughter get it all?"

Scott was at a loss for words. For years, his sister, Paula, had used this argument to chastise him.

He felt guilt and resentment, but Vivienne should not be the one to bear the brunt of it.

"Leading men on?" Vivienne laughed as her hands casually slipped into her pockets. "I heard you were barely nineteen when you drugged your husband-to-be, got pregnant, and marched over to the Miller

family to demand a wedding, breaking up his engagement in the process. I must say, I can't hold a candle to you."

The room fell into an awkward silence. Paula's manipulation of her husband, Mark Miller, was no secret. Many remembered her tantrums in the Miller household and her relentless harassment of Mark's ex-fiancée.

This was the first time the truth about Paula drugging Mark was spoken out loud, even if it had been suspected all along.

Paula's face flushed with embarrassment. She hadn't expected Vivienne to be aware of her past indiscretions.

"How dare you speak to your aunt like this?!" A young man appeared at the top of the stairs, rushing to his mother's side with his hand raised to slap Vivienne.

Percival's eyes darkened at the audacity. Would he dare lay a hand on his fiancée?

Before he could react, Vivienne had already caught the man's wrist in mid-air, twisting it viciously.

"Ah!" The young man screamed in pain.

"Let go of my son!" Paula shrieked and lunged at Vivienne.

Vivienne side-stepped Paula, not letting go of the man's wrist but instead increasing the pressure. After causing him to collapse in pain, she addressed Paula. "What was it you said? 'The sins of the father fall upon the child'? By that logic, shouldn't your son bear the consequences for your actions?"

She held the man's arm at an unnatural angle; his excruciating pain was evident. "However, I'm not known for my gentle touch." She stated nonchalantly, "If he ends up injured, please don't hold it against me. After all, you started it, and don't forget, 'the sins of the mother fall upon the child.'"

Percival watched her handle the situation with a smirk. This was his Vivienne. She would never let anyone walk over her. She seemed to be enjoying stirring up trouble in the Brooks house.

"Harlot!" Paula spat as she attempted to charge at Vivienne again, but one look from Vivienne froze her in her tracks. The threat in Vivienne's eyes was clear. Touch her, and her hand would be broken.

"Mom!" Paula glared at Judith with a resentful expression. "You're just going to let her do this?"

"Wasn't it Eddy who started it?" Judith retorted coldly. "You were the one who insulted Vivienne first, but

he attacked his own cousin without any reason. It's only fair that he gets a taste of his own medicine."

Vivienne's sudden retaliation came as a shock to everyone.

Ashley was particularly surprised. Paula, her aunt, always had a superior attitude towards her. It was annoying, but she never dared rebuke her in person.

But Vivienne not only confronted Paula directly but also attacked Paula's beloved son, Eddy.

However, since it was Eddy who initiated the fight, nobody intervened, even though Vivienne's retaliation was fierce.

"Mom!" Paula cried out in desperation, but Judith remained indifferent.

Then she glared at Scott. "Scott, you've hurt my daughter. Are you going to let your daughter hurt my son too?"

Scott glanced at Vivienne. "Vivienne is right. I never raised her for a single day, yet you want to blame her for my mistakes. It's only fair that she blames your offenses on Eddy."

His gaze was cold, radiating the authority a head of the family should have. He continued, "Is my daughter someone who can be bullied? NO! Not even by Eddy, and certainly not by you."

Vivienne seemed unbothered by the various expressions on the faces of the Brooks family. She just

kept tightening her grip, watching as Eddy's face turned pale from pain. Only then did she lean slightly

towards him, speaking in a slow and menacing tone. "Remember this. I only acknowledge her as my aunt if I say so. If I don't, she is nothing."

With that, she finally let go of Eddy's wrist and put her hand back in her pocket.

"Brother, I heard Vivienne is back!" At that moment, Scott's brother, Timothy's laughter echoed from the

entrance.

Chapter 238

He walked in with his wife, Cheryl, and his eldest son, Ronald, followed by his second son, Carl. They were surprised to see Eddy kneeling before Vivienne in the living room and a furious Paula making a scene.

"What's going on?"

"Brother!" Paula cried out to Timothy as if he were her only hope, accusing Vivienne of being disrespectful. "Look at what our eldest brother has brought back. She's being so rude, and she even hit Eddy!"

Timothy's brows furrowed with displeasure. Ronald tried to intervene, but Timothy had already started scolding Vivienne. "Vivienne, you're acting out of line! Your aunt Paula may be blunt, but you can't

disrespect your elders, let alone lay hands on your cousin."

Ronald and Cheryl exchanged helpless glances.

Paula had been harboring resentment toward Scott for many years. Now that she saw Scott's daughter,

it was inevitable that she would vent her anger at her.

Timothy, however, was always swayed by Paula's persuasive language out of sympathy for his beloved

sister.

Vivienne looked annoyed. She was about to speak but was interrupted by Percival's phone ringing.

He glanced at the caller ID and picked up the call. "Granddad."

All eyes were immediately on Percival. He held the phone out and put it on speaker mode, so everyone

could hear Richard's irate voice bellowing from the phone.

"Where is my granddaughter-in-law!? You were supposed to bring Vivienne to meet me and spend

some time with me. Where is she? Didn't you come back to Rivenwood with her? At least let Vivienne

come and keep me company! Why did you kidnap her?"

"I didn't kidnap her." Percival replied while looking at the Brooks family with cold eyes. "Vivienne is the

daughter of the Brooks family's head, and our car was stopped in the middle of the road by his

entourage."

He passed the blame to Scott without hesitation. "I accompanied Vivienne to meet her family."

"Vivienne is Scott's child?" Richard sounded surprised, then laughed heartily. "It seems like the Brooks

family is blind. Why had they previously recognized Arabella as their own?"

The Brooks family fell silent as they began reflecting on their past mistakes.

Paula was the only one who chuckled sarcastically.

"It seems like the Brooks family doesn't welcome Vivienne." Percival sighed as his cold gaze fell on

Scott. "We hadn't even had a chance to sit down before her aunt started ridiculing Vivienne for being

engaged to me."

The Brooks family's faces turned pale. They knew they were in trouble.

Richard's enraged voice echoed from the phone. "What?! My precious granddaughter-in-law is being

bullied in Scott's house?!

Bring Vivienne back to our house immediately! If the Brooks family can't tolerate her, the Ellington

family has plenty of space. I'd love for Vivienne to stay with us. I can't believe they have the guts to

bully my granddaughter-in-law! I need to go give old Baron a piece of my mind!"

After hanging up the phone, Percival looked at Scott with a smile that wasn't quite a smile. "You heard my granddad. If your family doesn't welcome Vivienne, don't force her to stay. I'll take her back with me."

The many members of the Brooks family looked uncomfortable. They didn't expect Percival to report this to Richard.

Timothy, guessing the gist of the situation, felt it was beneath him to apologize as the elder of the family.

"You must be Vivienne. You're very pretty." Cheryl stepped in to smooth things over, taking Vivienne's hand with a smile. "Your uncle Timothy is a bit slow. Don't mind him."

She was practically calling Timothy stupid for being easily manipulated by Paula.

Timothy opened his mouth to make his case, but Cheryl glared him down.

She introduced Ronald and another young man to Vivienne. "This is your cousin Ronald and your second cousin Carl."

"We've met in Havenwood." Ronald greeted Vivienne with a friendly smile.

"Hello." Vivienne responded indifferently.

Carl scoffed and didn't even glance at Vivienne. He headed upstairs, declaring, "I'm tired. I'm going to rest for a bit."

His disrespectful behavior made Cheryl instantly feel awkward.

"He just got back from abroad and is still adjusting to the time difference. He didn't mean to offend you."

Ronald explained apologetically to Vivienne.

But Vivienne didn't care. Whether it was intentional rudeness or genuine tiredness, it had nothing to do with her.

Returning to the Brooks family was not about living peacefully with them.

So she didn't give a damn about how the Brooks family felt about her or how they perceived her.

In short, they better not mess with her.

If they did, it would be their own fault. And if they were at fault, they were going to receive a serious whooping!

It had been a long time since she had had a good brawl. The last time she had a really good fight was

when she saved someone from Felix. It wasn't enough.

This time around, the Brooks family would make a perfect punching bag.

Melissa thought Vivienne might be upset about Carl's actions after seeing her be so silent. She quickly diverted the topic by introducing Ashley. "Oh, I forgot to introduce you. This is your cousin Ashley, my daughter. I'm your aunt."

"I also have a son who is older than you, but he isn't home yet. You'll meet him later at lunch."

"Nice to meet you." Vivienne nodded politely.

"Vivienne, you and Mr. Ellington must be tired from the journey." Picking up her mother's cue, Ashley immediately got chummy with Vivienne. "Your room is ready. Why don't you folks freshen up and change?"

Vivienne and Percival didn't object, and they followed Melissa and Ashley upstairs.

As soon as they left, Ronald's cell phone rang. He glanced at the screen and grimaced at Scott and Timothy.

"It's my grandpa."

Timothy took a deep breath, while Scott waved his hand, indicating for Ronald to answer the call.

Ronald reluctantly picked up the phone, bracing himself for Baron's wrath.

As expected, the moment he answered the call, Baron unleashed a barrage of curses and insults. "Are you a bunch of pigs? First, you misidentify her, and now, when you finally recognize her, you're still causing her trouble?

If your brains don't work, see a doctor! Don't be a pain in my neck all day. Vivienne has been wronged for so many years, so you better make it up to her! If you dare mess around again, I won't let you off when I get back!"

Ronald rubbed his temples, listening without daring to interrupt.

"Give the phone to Paula!" Baron roared from the other end.

Chapter 239

Ronald hastily handed his phone to Paula as if it were a ticking bomb, not wanting to hold it for even a second longer.

Paula, puzzled, took the phone, only to get an earful of Baron's fury. "Are you out of your mind?! If you've got nothing better to do, stay at your own place! If you dare upset Vivienne again and get Old Richard on my case, don't even think about stepping foot in our mansion again!"

Paula's face turned ashen with fury, but she could not retaliate against Baron. She muttered an apology and hung up the call.

...

Third floor.

The Brooks family had arranged for Percival to stay next to Vivienne's room. After he entered his room alone, Melissa and Ashley accompanied Vivienne into her room.

However, they didn't linger, exchanged a few words, and left, closing the door behind them.

But as Ashley was about to leave, she stretched her neck back in and emphasized rather 'thoughtfully,'

"Don't worry. We all know how much you despise Arabella. So even though she lived in this room before, we've replaced everything. Take your time settling in."

After saying that, she retracted her head as her gaze subtly swept over Percival's door. She then followed Melissa downstairs.

Arabella had lived here?

Ha!

Vivienne stood alone in the room, observing the layout and its furnishings.

Just from the room's layout, it was clear that Scott had made a significant effort for his long-lost daughter.

The room was spacious and well-lit; furthermore, all the furniture and bedding were obviously brand new. The balcony was filled with blooming flowers, and the vanity was filled with top-brand skincare products, as if they were unsure which one she preferred, so they just got them all.

The wardrobe was crammed full of luxury-brand women's clothing. It even included lingerie.

Seemingly unsure of her size, they had bought all sizes just in case.

Vivienne looked at the pile of pretty dresses in the wardrobe, her beautiful, pale face expressionless.

She picked the simplest dress and went into the bathroom.

The bathroom was spacious and had a whirlpool tub. Since she had plenty of time, she filled the tub and leisurely lay in it. She texted Draven while soaking, asking him to send her luggage over to the Brooks Mansion.

Then a message from Percival popped up on her phone. "Done bathing?"

Vivienne raised an eyebrow, replying, "No."

"No? You replied so fast."

"I'm soaking in the tub."

"Together."

"?"

What did that mean?

She stared intently at the bathroom door, wondering if Percival would really barge in. Should she hit him?

After a while, Percival texted back. "I'm also in the tub now."

Vivienne was at a loss.

She was overthinking.

But she did feel a little disappointed. She was expecting to hit him.

Percival texted again. "How long are you planning to stay here?"

"Don't know."

"If you're not happy staying here, why not come back to the Ellington Mansion with me?"

"Not yet."

Percival felt a bit frustrated as he looked at Vivienne's last message. If he couldn't coax Vivienne back to the Ellington Mansion, did he have to keep staying at the Brooks Mansion?

But, after thinking about it, it didn't seem like a bad idea.

So, he texted Thomas to bring his luggage over and texted Vivienne back. "Vivienne, my back hurts."

Vivienne stared at his coquettish message on her phone, highly suspecting his intentions.

But when she remembered how mercilessly the three baseball bats hit Percival's back, she decided to check on him.

When he received the "I'm coming" message from Vivienne, the corners of Percival's mouth turned up slightly.

Good. His girl still cared about him.

He stood up from the bathtub and looked at himself in the bathroom mirror. His messy hair was wet and dripping. His skin was slightly reddened from the hot bath, making him look incredibly sexy.

He was quite satisfied and purposely wore only a bathrobe.

There was a knock at the door. He opened the door, only to be stunned by the sight of the girl standing

in the frame of the door.

Vivienne wore the simplest white dress she found in the wardrobe. The dress only had two thin straps holding it up by her shoulders. The upper half of the dress outlined her figure, narrowing at the waist to show her perfect, slender waistline. The slight puff of the skirt and her soft hair cascading over her shoulders added a youthful touch.

He had never seen Vivienne dress in such a youthful and romantic style before. Even though her face was still stern, she looked much softer.

Vivienne was also taken aback when she saw Percival wearing only a bathrobe. His chest was exposed, showing his well-defined pecs.

The drops of water from his hair fell onto his slightly reddened cheeks, sliding down his sharp jawline, down his chest, and disappearing into his abs, leaving a suggestive trail of water.

After noticing that Vivienne's gaze uncontrollably followed the path of that droplet, moving lower and lower, Percival began chuckling lightly. "Vivienne, you're so lustful."

Vivienne snapped back to reality. Her cheeks were flushed, and she glared at him fiercely.

He was the one trying to seduce her by dressing like this. Who was the real lewd one here?!

She sternly pushed him back into the room and closed the door behind her. Her attitude made it seem more like she was here to settle a score with him rather than check on his injury.

"Lay down on the bed!" Her flushed cheeks betrayed her stern mood.

Percival lay obediently on the bed with a mischievous smile on his face. "Vivienne, are you going to take me by force?"

"Shut it!" Vivienne curtly commanded him as she strode over and pulled back Percival's robe, revealing the deep shades of purple and blue that stained half his back. Her brows furrowed immediately. "It's so swollen! Why didn't you say something earlier?"

"It's just a flesh wound. As long as the bones are intact, it's fine." Percival replied nonchalantly.

As a squad leader at the Vanguard Agency, danger was part of the job description. Injuries were as commonplace as breakfast cereal.

Especially when the injuries were sustained in the act of protecting Vivienne. He didn't mind in the slightest.

Unseen by Percival, Vivienne's gaze on his back was unreadable. The depths of her emotions

remained a secret.

Once she confirmed that his ribs were unbroken, she began to apply a healing salve. To maximize the effect, she gently massaged it into his skin, spreading the cool, soothing balm with her warm fingers.

Percival lay face down on the bed with his eyes closed, savoring the comforting pressure of Vivienne's hands on his back. She methodically worked the salve into his skin, kneading and massaging with the utmost care. He had to fight to suppress the spark of desire her touch ignited within him.

Suddenly, they were interrupted by a knock at the door and Ashley's voice. "Vivienne, are you ready?

It's time for lunch."

Vivienne wiped her hands clean of the salve and went to answer the door.

Ashley, who had been knocking on Vivienne's door, froze in surprise as Vivienne emerged from

Percival's room instead.

Chapter 240

Her gaze swept over the room, landing on Percival. He was lying on the bed with his bare back glistening. Ashley had no idea what had been going on before she arrived.

However, Percival's smooth, muscular back was exposed, and Ashley took it all in. Suddenly, Ashley's

head felt hot, and her nostrils were filled with a warm sensation.

"You're having a nosebleed." Vivienne's eyebrows furrowed as she stared at Ashley's sudden nosebleed.

"No, it's okay!" Ashley quickly covered her nose and darted off, yelling, "Don't forget to come down for dinner!"

Vivienne watched her retreating figure and felt confused. She turned back to see Percival still lying on the bed in his rather sensual pose.

Suddenly, everything clicked. She scoffed at Percival. "You're not acting like a gentleman."

Percival was puzzled.

What did she mean?

How was he not acting like a gentleman?

He'd been celibate for twenty-nine years. Wasn't that enough?

Although Percival didn't have a closet full of clothes to choose from, the Brooks family had arranged for a tailored suit to be sent to him.

When he and Vivienne descended the stairs, the entire Brooks family was waiting for them in the living

room.

"Ah, so disrespectful, making us all wait for so long." Paula started with her sarcastic tone.

"Is your son's hand not hurting anymore?" Vivienne countered. Her cool gaze was fixed on Paula as

her ice-cold voice rang out.

Paula's face changed, and she quickly shut her mouth. Eddy, sitting next to her, scowled at Vivienne.

Carl, sitting next to Ronald, sneered.

"Vivienne, come sit with Grandma." Judith smiled and extended her hand.

Vivienne graciously moved to sit next to Judith, subtly pulling her hand away.

Judith watched as Vivienne withdrew her hand with a flicker of disappointment in her eyes, but she

quickly laughed it off. "I've been wanting to have a proper chat with you for a while. I've been wanting to

thank you for saving me, but you never have time. Now that we'll be living together, I'll take good care

of you."

"Mom, it's not that she doesn't have time; it's that she doesn't want to pay any attention to you." Paula

said while glancing at Vivienne.

"That just proves Vivienne's character. She doesn't use her kindness for her own gain." Judith rebuked, staring at Paula. "She saved my life, and I made it clear that I wanted to thank her. We are a prominent family, so me owing her is a big deal. If she were of poor character, she could have demanded anything she wanted. But she didn't even meet with me. Because she's not interested in our wealth or gratitude. Where can you find such a good child who helps others without expecting anything in return?"

Vivienne remained silent, but her brows were furrowed.

She indeed didn't care about the Brooks family's gratitude and didn't crave any repayment.

But she didn't meet with Judith because she just didn't want to see them. There was nothing noble about it.

Paula was left speechless.

"Paula, I know you've been blaming your older brother for Katara's incident." Judith warned Paula.

"You've been disrespectful to him all these years, and I didn't say anything. But from now on, be nice to

Vivienne. Your grievances have nothing to do with her!"

Paula bit her lip, not wanting to respond, but under Judith's stern gaze, she had to relent. "Fine, Mom."

Then Cassie came in and reported, "Mila Clark and Calista Pendleton are here."

Judith and Scott both frowned. Ashley and the rest turned to look at Vivienne, recalling how she had ruined Mila's concert last time.

"Mom, Mila heard that big brother found his real daughter, so she came over to congratulate him."

Paula stood up with a smile and walked towards the door.

She and Mila had always been close friends. After Mila divorced William Pendleton, she would come to the Brooks Mansion under the pretext of visiting Paula, trying to get closer to Scott.

Mila was supposed to have two more concerts, but after her Havenwood concert was ruined by Vivienne, she got into a car accident on her way to the next city and injured her hand, so she had to cancel the rest of the tour and return to Rivenwood.

In the past two days since returning to Rivenwood, Mila had expected the Brooks family to feel guilty about her accident since she had left Havenwood out of embarrassment caused by them, but instead, she heard that Scott had found another daughter.

She hurriedly brought Calista to the Brooks Mansion under the guise of congratulating them. She was intent on marrying Scott, but if his new daughter was as difficult to get along with as Arabella, it would

be a real hassle.

Calista was wearing her gold-rimmed glasses again today. She was dressed in a white suit, and her long hair was tied up behind her, making her look very crisp and efficient.

She followed Mila into the living room with an impassive expression on her face. Eddy's and Carl's eyes lit up the moment they saw her.

"Calista, you're here." Carl greeted her with a smile and stood up to welcome her.

"It's been a while, hasn't it, Calista?" Eddy chuckled, giving a nod towards Calista.

Percival squinted his eyes, casting a glance at the two. They hadn't been this friendly when Vivienne arrived. If he didn't know any better, he'd think Calista was their real cousin.

He turned his gaze to Vivienne, who seemed completely unfazed by the differential treatment from her supposed relatives.

He didn't notice Calista freeze for a moment when their eyes met. There was a glimmer of light in hers.

But then she saw Vivienne sitting next to Judith, and her heart filled with dread.

Sure enough, the next second, Paula tugged at Mila, pointing at Vivienne. "This is my big brother's

newly found daughter, Vivienne."

Mila stared at Vivienne as her face turned sour. She never imagined that the little girl who ruined her concert at Havenwood was actually Scott's biological daughter.

Looking back now, Scott's unusual treatment of Vivienne made sense.

Vivienne slowly lifted her eyes, and her frosty gaze swept over Mila's tight face, landing on Calista. She locked eyes with her across the room as a slow smile spread across her face.

So, it was that woman who'd been eyeing Percival.

She tilted her head, shooting a knowing look at Percival.

Percival didn't really understand what was going on.

What was it now?

Ever since this young girl arrived here, her moods have been as unpredictable as New England's weather.