

Million-Dollar 261

Chapter 261

Baron froze. He was visibly annoyed.

“What’s so special about that old codger Richard? He’s as ugly as a mud fence!”

Percival and Vivienne were truly at a loss.

Were these two geezers mortal enemies in a past life?

Did they love to hate each other in this life?

After seeing Percival and Vivienne hold their peace, Baron reluctantly waved his hand in irritation. "Go

on then! That old coot is trying to steal my long-lost granddaughter."

As soon as he finished speaking, Judith chimed in hurriedly. "Should I have someone prepare a gift?"

"There's no need; I'll take care of it myself." Vivienne replied indifferently.

Judith paused and sighed.

She could clearly sense Vivienne's cold attitude towards their family.

After all, she had been left to fend for herself for over a decade, enduring countless hardships.

And with Paula's recent shenanigans since her return, it was only natural that Vivienne would harbor

some resentment.

Judith felt helpless, knowing that all she could do was try to make it up to Vivienne over time.

After breakfast, Vivienne and Percival set out for the Ellington family's mansion.

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The Ellington family's mansion.

Richard's wrinkled face was alight with joy.

"Cecilia, prepare some good food and drinks. My darling granddaughter-in-law is coming to visit."

Upon hearing that Vivienne was coming, Cecilia looked like she was over the moon. She promptly

instructed the servants to tidy up and prepare for her arrival.

The Ellington Mansion was soon buzzing with activity.

Upon hearing the commotion, Cathy sent a maid to find out what was happening.

"She's just a country bumpkin? Why is the old man treating her like a treasure?!" Cathy scoffed.

Recalling the information provided by Paula and the billion-dollar stone, Cathy made a few phone calls,

then left her room.

She hadn't gone far when she saw Cecilia orchestrating the servants in the living room.

Cathy paused. She remembered that Cecilia didn't think too highly of Vivienne or her family.

So why was she so enthusiastic now?

As she pondered, she approached Cecilia.

"Cecilia, did you know that our family unearthed an stone worth over a billion?"

Without giving it much thought, Cecilia simply replied, "Yes, I know. Vivienne discovered it."

Cathy was confused.

Why did Cecilia sound so smug?

She leaned in closer to probe further. "Did you know that Percival paid 30 million for it?"

Her own son, Paul, the eldest grandson of the Ellington family, didn't even have that much for his yearly allowance.

"Yes, I know. It's just 30 million. My son can earn it back."

Cecilia looked entirely unfazed.

Cathy's face turned green with envy.

"Percival's earnings are still the Ellington family's. The money was spent and it yielded a return, so it should belong to our family, don't you think?"

Cecilia looked at Cathy for a moment, then chuckled. "Cathy, are you coveting my daughter-in-law's money? Let me be clear. That 30 million was Percival's gift to my daughter-in-law. If he's happy to spend it and she's happy to keep it, then you really shouldn't concern yourself with it."

"What are you talking about, Cecilia? I'm only saying this for your own good! You only think about your son and daughter-in-law, but have they thought about you? They didn't even offer to share the stone with you, did they?"

Cecilia's expression turned cold. "My daughter-in-law has given me plenty. Cathy, you really shouldn't worry about my family's affairs."

Cathy sneered. "She's just a country girl. What could she possibly give you?"

Just then, a commotion erupted from outside.

It was Percival and Vivienne arriving.

Cecilia left Cathy standing in the dust and rushed out to greet them.

"Vivienne! Come in! Come in!" Cecilia said as she took Vivienne's hand.

Before Vivienne could even greet her, Cecilia had already ushered her into the main hall.

Percival was left standing to one side.

Percival was dumbfounded.

Wasn't he her son?

Richard was all smiles when he saw Vivienne. "There you are, Vivienne. Did those idiots give you any trouble after I left yesterday? If they did, you must tell me. I'll give Baron a piece of my mind."

Vivienne looked up at Richard's concerned face and gave him a small smile. "Thank you, Grandpa! No one's been bullying me."

"That's good to hear. If anyone does, you must tell me."

Vivienne nodded. "Okay."

She then turned to Nathan Ellington, Percival's father, standing not far from Richard.

This was only the second time she had met him. Perhaps due to his years in the business world, he always seemed to carry a hint of sharpness, even when he didn't say a word.

Vivienne greeted him politely.

Nathan nodded, his face warm and welcoming. "How are you living in Rivenwood so far?"

"It's good." Vivienne replied, her voice soft.

"I heard about what happened yesterday from Cecilia." Nathan began. He was a man of few words. "If

you're feeling uncomfortable there, feel free to come to our place. No one will dare bother you here."

He didn't have anything against his daughter-in-law.

If Richard was happy, Percival was happy, and even his wife was happy, then he had no objections.

But now that Vivienne was part of their family, there was no way he'd allow her to be mistreated.

He'd been tied up at work late into the night yesterday. If he'd been with them at the Brooks Mansion,

Eddy's drama would have been even worse.

"Thank you, Nathan." Vivienne's smile was genuine.

Cathy, standing to the side, frowned at the sight. She was truly irked by Vivienne's presence. "Percival,

isn't your wife a bit too casual? It's her first time here, and she doesn't even bother to greet the elders."

She sipped her coffee with a nonchalant air. "The Ellington's are an eminent family. We can't accept

such a lack of manners. You need to teach her better!"

Cecilia's face darkened. "Vivienne's manners are just fine. She doesn't need any lessons! We're not

royalty; we don't need such formalities. You should focus on yourself, Cathy!"

She had been irritated when Cathy casually mentioned the billion-dollar stone Vivienne had obtained.

And now she had to listen to her accuse Vivienne of having no manners? Ridiculous!

Her daughter-in-law didn't need to follow any rules.

As long as Vivienne was willing, even if she wanted to strut around the Ellington's mansion, she would always back her up.

Cathy's face changed, and her voice was now laced with anger. "What do you mean? I'm trying to help her fit in, and you're attacking me for it?"

"Thank you!" Cecilia shot back with an ice-cold tone. "I don't need your help. Just live your life and stop meddling in others' affairs."

Cathy's face turned pale, and she looked at Richard for support. "Dad..."

She barely opened her mouth before Richard shot her a cold glance. His voice was devoid of warmth.

"What? My granddaughter-in-law needs you to teach her manners? Have you been living such a comfortable life that you think you can pull a Paula here? You're welcome to try! See if I don't break your legs!"

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Cathy's face turned ashen, and she swallowed down everything she had intended to say.

But inside, she was seething. Her glare toward Vivienne was as sharp as a blade.

She could put up with Percival's incompetence, but Vivienne, a country bumpkin who thought she could steal the affections of Richard?

In her dreams!

Since Vivienne had decided to visit on short notice, not everyone in the Ellington family was present.

Only Ryan's family, who had heard the news, and a few women whom his wife, Cathy, had purposely stirred up to embarrass Vivienne were there.

They were almost choked with rage at the sight.

"Alright, alright, everyone disperse. I want to have a word with Vivienne." Richard waved his hand, indicating that everyone should leave the room.

Paul felt a rush of anger. "When I brought Lisa home last time, you weren't this welcoming, Grandpa."

Richard glanced at him. "Who did you bring home? Can she even compare to Vivienne?"

"And why can't she compare? Lisa is much more polite than this girl. She even brought you a gift. Have you forgotten?" Paul countered.

Upon hearing this, Richard became livid. "You have the audacity to talk about gifts? What a load of crap!"

Paul remembered that when he brought Lisa last time, she had gifted Richard a kidney supplement.

She thought it would help the old man regain his strength. What was wrong with that?

After watching Paul being scolded, Cathy quickly jumped in. "Whether good or bad, it was a heartfelt gesture from Paul and his girlfriend. How can you not appreciate it, Dad? We aren't greedy, but as a wealthy family, we should observe some manners."

Richard was about to fire back when Percival suddenly spoke. "Grandpa, Vivienne has brought you a gift."

He gave Thomas a nod, who immediately brought the gift over.

"Richard, this is a special gift prepared by Vivienne for you."

"Cecilia, this is yours, and there's one for Nathan as well."

Cecilia instantly noticed the elegant dress in the transparent gift box. It was simple yet opulent. It was a piece of art!

Cecilia held it gently in her arms as her eyes sparkled with delight.

"Is this a Charles' design?" Cathy recognized the distinctive logo at once.

Upon seeing this, others expressed their astonishment as well. "This... this can't be a fake, can it?"

"It doesn't look like it. With this design and material, it couldn't be a fake."

"Maybe it's rented."

"Even if it's rented, it wouldn't come cheap!"

Cecilia, with her sharp ears, heard Cathy and the others' whispers.

"What fake? What rented? This is a design by Charles herself. It's specifically for me! It's a one-of-a-kind piece in the whole world."

How could her daughter-in-law's designs be fake?

They wished Vivienne could design for them, but they should check if they even deserve it.

"Master Charles is hard to get a hold of. How could she possibly design clothes for you?" Cathy

sneered. "Cecilia, you wouldn't have bought a fake to save dignity for your daughter-in-law, would you?"

Even though Vivienne's identity as Charles was revealed in Havenwood, Matthew quickly removed the

news from the internet.

Cathy, as a top-tier socialite, had no interest in the news of Havenwood's upper class.

So, she had no idea that Vivienne was Charles.

“Hmph!” Cecilia gave her a nonchalant look. “Just because you can’t get in touch with Charles doesn’t mean I can’t.”

She couldn’t be bothered to explain to Cathy.

Of course, she wouldn’t reveal that Vivienne was Charles.

If everyone started requesting Vivienne to design their dresses, how tired would she be?

This honor was for her alone to enjoy.

Cathy, taken aback, fell silent, all the while casting envious glances at the dress.

In Rivenwood’s high society, who wouldn’t want a dress designed by Charles?

Yet, it was Cecilia who had it.

She could only console herself by believing that Cecilia’s dress was a fake.

After failing to get a positive response from Cecilia, Cathy turned to Richard. “Dad, what’s your gift?”

Richard held a simple wooden box in his hands.

He opened it with a bright smile to reveal an elegant and vintage wooden bead bracelet, which seemed perfect for an old man.

"I thought it would be something special, but it's just a wooden bead bracelet." Paul scoffed as a look of disdain appeared on his face.

Richard shot him a glare. "If you don't want to stay here, then get out."

With that, he took out the wooden bead bracelet and wore it on his wrist, looking highly pleased.

"Vivienne, your gift is just perfect for me."

At his age and status, money was no longer of much value to him.

A gift that was chosen with heart was what mattered.

It was evident that Vivienne had chosen the bracelet with care.

"What a pleasant smell! What is it?" Someone suddenly caught a whiff of a soothing fragrance that seemed to instantly rejuvenate them.

"This is..." Ryan Ellington, Richard's oldest son, who had been silent till now, suddenly noticed the symbol on Richard's bracelet.

He startled and exclaimed, "Specter Healer?!"

"What's a Specter Healer?" Everyone was surprised.

Both Richard and Percival were taken aback, not comprehending the situation.

Paul was still clueless.

Ryan, however, was already fired up.

It was indeed the mark of the Specter Healer. And if he wasn't mistaken, the bracelet was made from a unique tree found only in the South Mountains. It was said that when combined with certain herbs, it could cure all ailments.

The fragrance from the bracelet was already lifting their spirits.

If he wore it around his wrist daily, the old man would probably live well past a hundred and still be as spry as ever.

"What is this thing? Is it valuable?" Cathy asked, her eyebrows furrowing at everyone's shock.

She didn't bother asking silly questions like who Specter Healer was. She just wanted to know if the bracelet was worth any money.

Specter Healer's remedies were worth at least ten million on the market.

Ryan gave Cathy a nod, and his solemn expression was enough to indicate that this item's worth was

not something that could be summed up as simply "valuable."

It was exceedingly valuable.

Ryan and Cathy then remembered that Vivienne was a country bumpkin. Where did she get the money

to buy something so valuable?

Not to mention Cecilia's designer gown.

All of these must have been bought by Percival for Vivienne to show off in front of the Ellington family.

"This bracelet looks nice, but it surely can't be as valuable as that gemstone, right?" Cathy raised her

brows and spoke nonchalantly.

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No sooner had Cathy finished speaking than Richard shot her a frosty look. "If you keep your mouth

shut, no one will mistake you for a mute."

Cecilia's and Nathan's faces darkened as well, but out of respect for Vivienne's first visit, they chose to

keep their opinions to themselves.

After all, they had the old man to handle the situation.

He alone could command the room.

Catching their icy glances, Cathy raised an eyebrow. "Why are you all looking at me like that? Is this bracelet worth more than that gemstone?"

She turned her gaze towards Vivienne, assuming an air of superiority. "Vivienne, no offense, but you secretly kept the stone you won from the gemstone auction. I heard that you used Percival's money for it. It's a beautiful gemstone, so why didn't you show it to your grandfather? That's quite selfish of you."

Vivienne looked up at her, took a sip of her tea, and nonchalantly asked, "Who told you I used Mr. Ellington's money?"

Cathy paused for a moment and then frowned. "Are you lying? Everyone saw Percival pay for it. What? You don't want to give the stone to the Ellington family, so you're making excuses that the money wasn't Percival's? Then who paid for the gemstone, you?"

Before Vivienne could respond, Cathy sneered. "I don't mean to insult you, but you should know your place. You grew up in a small town, so you've never seen such a large sum, let alone 30 million."

"30 million, huh?" Vivienne leaned back in her chair and crossed her legs. "That's a whole lot of money."

She turned her gaze to Percival as a playful smirk appeared on her face. "Percival, how many bills make up 30 million?"

Percival grinned and answered in an indulgent tone. "Quite a lot, I suppose. I've never counted. Would you like to, Vivienne?"

Vivienne's eyes crinkled in amusement. "No, I'm just a small-town girl. I haven't seen much of the world."

Percival's smile grew brighter as he took Vivienne's hand and gazed at her with all the tenderness he had. "There's no need to argue with such ignorant people. My Vivienne is a rich woman. I'll be relying on you to support me."

These fools only saw him paying for her, but they didn't see who was actually footing the bill.

If they knew that she was the one with a limited-edition black card, they might just drop dead.

"Deal!" Vivienne's eyes twinkled. "One bread roll a day. I'll keep you well-fed."

Cathy was instantly annoyed to see Vivienne disregard her and flirt with Percival. "Vivienne, what's with your attitude? I'm talking about the stone. Why are you talking about 30 million?"

“Shut up!” Richard roared. “Vivienne won the stone because she's capable, so why are you acting so jealous?”

He then turned to Vivienne. “You know, ever since I put on this bracelet, I haven't been able to get angry. It's strange.”

He usually had a fiery temper, but now he felt unusually calm, even when dealing with these foolish youngsters.

He knew anything with the Specter Healer mark was valuable, but he never expected it to have such a calming effect.

Vivienne turned to the old man and smiled. “Isn't that a good thing? It'll help you keep your health.”

Richard admired the bracelet on his wrist. “This is a treasure. I need to show it off to Baron!”

Vivienne was at a loss.

That was completely unnecessary.

“Dad, how could you say that?” Cathy looked upset. “You're showing favoritism towards Percival. He can spend 30 million on a woman he's not even married to, while Paul can't even buy a car he likes because you control his finances. You're being too biased.”

The Ellington family, although a powerful clan, was under the financial control of the old man.

Each of his sons had a five percent stake, with dividends paid out at the end of the year and a fixed monthly stipend of a million. Not a penny more.

Unless there was an emergency, the old man would not give out more money.

But Percival was different. The old man was always generous with him. Percival even spent 30 million this time, and he didn't say a word.

Anyone would feel uncomfortable about this.

Moreover, the old man had previously announced that Percival would be his successor.

How could this be?

The old man's sons, even his other grandsons, were more capable than Percival.

Even the youngest, Kenneth Ellington, was a three-time E-sports champion.

Percival was a wastrel. If he took over the Ellington family, wouldn't it lead to their downfall?

Richard gave her a cold look. "I'm biased? How do you have the nerve to say that?"

"Am I wrong?" Cathy retorted.

Ryan shot her a glare. "Enough! Stop talking!"

"Why shouldn't I?" Cathy's emotions flared up. "Dad doesn't only have one son, and there are more grandsons than just Percival. Paul is older than Percival, but he hasn't found a suitable partner yet. Has dad ever worried about him?"

But for Percival, Dad personally attended his engagement party in Havenwood and even gave him so much money for his fiancée. Have you ever considered how the rest of us feel?"

As soon as she said this, the woman, who had remained silent from the start, suddenly interjected.

"Cathy's right, Dad! I don't mind you giving Percival money, but you have to treat everyone fairly. You can't just favor one over the other!"

This was Richard's second son, Henry Ellington's wife, Heloise.

She sat upright in her chair with her eyebrows slightly lifted and her tone indifferent. "If you gave Percival 30 million; then you have to give the same to all your grandchildren!"

"BANG!"

Richard slammed the table in anger. His voice was thunderous as he yelled, "What?! You all want to rebel?!"

"We're not rebelling!" Cathy stated, "We just want you to treat all the grandchildren fairly!"

"You're asking me for fairness?" Richard was furious, but for some reason, ever since he put on that bracelet, he was able to suppress his rage.

He scanned the crowd as his gaze finally fell on Cathy. "You want me to give Paul 30 million, but I ask you, what makes him deserving of this money? He's always out, messing around and making a fool of himself. First, he brings home Arabella, completely tarnishing the Ellington family's reputation. Now he's involved with this Lisa, a flamboyant woman who spends her days in endless revelry. What else does he do?"

"I..." Cathy tried to explain, but Richard didn't give her the chance.

"And then there's Earl Ellington; all he does is tinker with his damn motorcycles. The company generously gives you 50 million every year, so you can afford to waste 20 million on him. What do you mean by fairness?"

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Cathy was all riled up, but Richard wasn't inclined to continue arguing with her.

He turned to Heloise. "And then there's your eldest son. He spends all his days obsessing over his

paintings. I've offered him a chance to gain experience in the company, but he stubbornly refuses. Your daughter, Fiona, on the other hand, works her heart out for the company. And what has she received in return?"

Heloise raised an eyebrow, choosing to remain silent.

"Just the other day, her jewelry studio needed more materials but was short on funds. Do you think the 5 million I gave her was coughed up by a dog?"

Heloise remained silent. Her gaze was unfathomable.

How could 5 million compare to 30 million?

"You lot turn your noses up at Percival, but do you realize that the wealth you enjoy is all thanks to him?" Richard stated.

"What?" Ryan and Cathy's faces were a picture of disbelief.

Heloise was equally shocked as her gaze subconsciously landed on Richard.

Even Cecilia seemed to be temporarily dumbfounded.

Only Nathan appeared unsurprised.

After a moment, Cathy found her voice. "How is that possible? Ever since his accident, he's been idle.

He doesn't even know how to read the company's reports. How could he have brought us wealth?"

"Humph!" Richard scoffed. "That's because you're both ignorant and dull. Percival has been involved in the company's affairs for a decade, and it was largely thanks to him that the company survived through its toughest times. Without him, do you really think you'd be living the life you are now?"

Cathy and Heloise fell silent.

Percival was a good-for-nothing. They'd never believe such news out of the blue.

But given Richard's earnestness, they found themselves having to reconsider the way they thought of Percival.

Heloise stayed silent, but Cathy was unable to let Vivienne off so easily.

Why was it that when Percival's fiancée arrived, Richard could do nothing but sing her praises, but when her son, Paul, brought a girlfriend home, Richard found fault with everything about her?

With this thought, Cathy continued to voice her frustration. "The 30 million is spent, so we, the Ellingtons, should at least have a share of the stone."

"Why? It was through her own skill that she found the gemstone, so why should she share it with you?"

You think you're something special because you're a Ellingtons? So what? Who do you think you are?"

Richard glared at her.

Vivienne finally couldn't help but laugh.

Richard turned to her as a smile played on his lips. "Did you enjoy Grandpa's joke?"

Vivienne grinned. "Not bad at all!"

Anyone who could casually insult the entire Ellington family deserved respect.

"Paul's mother's last name isn't Ellington." Vivienne pointed out seriously.

Although Cathy was Ryan's wife, she still had her own last name.

"Exactly. Why is she demanding a share of your wealth on behalf of the Ellington family?"

Vivienne thought about it and found herself agreeing with Richard.

While watching Richard and Vivienne banter, Cathy felt ignored and disrespected. Her anger was

almost palpable.

"She's just a young girl, without money or influence, and yet she buys such expensive gifts for you and

Cecilia. It's obvious she's using Percival's money," Cathy insisted. She was determined to have

Vivienne part with the gemstone.

Paul chimed in. "Exactly, Grandpa. She used our family's money to get that precious stone. Now the money's gone, and she's not willing to give us the stone. It's clear she's also using Percival's money to buy gifts. If this continues, this little girl will ruin our family."

Percival glanced at Paul and spoke in a calm and steady tone. "Vivienne paid for the stone. Did you not hear? If you're having trouble understanding, maybe you should seek medical help. If you can't find a doctor, let me know. I can help."

He shrugged carelessly as he continued to humiliate his cousin. "A psychiatric hospital might be a good fit for you. Need me to give you a ride?"

"Percival! You!" Paul jumped up, feeling utterly infuriated. "You're the one who's insane!"

Cecilia's face darkened. "Who are you calling insane?"

Paul stiffened and looked up. He saw Cecilia and Richard's faces turn an icy blue, so he quickly added.

"We all know what Vivienne is. She's a country bumpkin from lowly origins. How could she possibly afford 30 million?"

"Huh?" Percival smirked. "She's from lowly origins?"

His gaze hardened, and a cold glint appeared in his eyes. "The Brooks family's daughter is from lowly origins?"

Paul was taken aback. He was failing to grasp the meaning of Percival's statement.

Cathy was also taken by surprise. "The Brooks family's daughter?"

News of Vivienne's return to the Brooks family hadn't spread widely yet.

When Paula had called her, she hadn't mentioned that Vivienne was the daughter of the Brooks family, so Cathy was unaware of Vivienne's true identity.

She had always assumed Vivienne was a country bumpkin.

The first to catch on was Paul. "Are you saying Vivienne is Scott Brooks' daughter?"

Percival lifted his gaze and looked at him coolly, but remained silent.

Paul suddenly remembered what Arabella had told him.

The Brooks family had always suspected that Arabella wasn't Scott's biological daughter and had secretly conducted three DNA tests.

And indeed, it was confirmed that Arabella wasn't Scott's daughter.

So Scott's real daughter... was Vivienne.

Paul's face turned a distinct shade of green.

He had been so eager to please Arabella. He was even willing to accept her unborn child, whose father was unknown.

He had even provoked Vivienne for Arabella's sake.

Who would have thought that Vivienne was Scott's daughter?!

And she was already engaged to Percival.

He was losing in the game of power against Percival, and now, with the powerful backing of the Brooks family, he was completely hopeless.

His face darkened. He absolutely couldn't let Vivienne and Percival get married!

The faces of the Ellington family were quite a spectacle.

Nobody could have imagined that Vivienne would be the young miss of the Brooks family. The Brooks

family might not be as affluent as the Ellingtons, but they could easily pull out 30 million dollars.

Richard gave them a glance and asked nonchalantly, "Are you done flaunting your superiority?"

The room fell silent.

Richard sipped his water, then said seriously, "I don't want anyone targeting Vivienne in this house. If anyone dares to bother her again, don't blame me for not being merciful."

Cathy was not willing to back down, but having been in the Ellington family for so many years, she could tell that Richard was angry.

If she said anything more at this point, the old man would mercilessly kick her out without hesitation.

She wasn't in a hurry. There was plenty of time.

Vivienne could be a country girl, but she couldn't be the young miss of the Brooks family, and she certainly couldn't marry Percival under the title of the Brooks family's young miss.

With that, they would have no hope at all.

She wanted to see if Vivienne and Percival could really end up together.

Seeing that no one else was speaking, Richard finally turned to Vivienne. "Vivienne, if someone bothers you in the future, just come and tell me."

Vivienne smiled faintly. "Alright."

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The Ellington clan, besides Richard and Percival's parents, didn't even register on her radar. She couldn't be bothered to spare them any thought.

Whether the money spent on the stone came from her pocket or Percival's was none of their business.

This time, for Richard's sake, she let it slide. But there wouldn't be a next time.

"By the way, I'm planning a party here in Rivenwood to formally introduce you to everyone." Richard announced. "Back in Havenwood, no one knew who you were. There were always small-minded folks who relished feeling superior, so I want everyone to know that you're my granddaughter-in-law. If anyone tries to bother you, they'll have to think twice."

With that, Richard turned to Percival. "What do you think, kiddo?"

"I couldn't agree more."

Ever since Vivienne decided to come to Rivenwood, Percival had instructed Thomas to start preparing a feast.

He had been playing the cripple for years, so it was about time things got on track.

Ever since Vivienne got engaged to him, people have been mocking her for marrying a 'good-for-nothing.' He could shrug off the insults, but he wouldn't let his little lady be wronged.

"Vivienne, what about you?" Richard asked Vivienne.

Vivienne furrowed her brows and remained silent for a moment before saying, "Let's go with your plan, Grandpa."

"Great! It's settled then." Richard wrapped up the conversation, then turned to Cecilia. "You take care of the arrangements in the next few days. Let's get this done sooner rather than later."

"I got it, Dad." Cecilia replied.

Afterward, Richard gave Vivienne a tour around the Ellington Mansion.

The Ellington Mansion was quite different from the Brooks Mansion. It was actually more of a courtyard. It was somewhat like a cloister, yet tinged with the air of an ancient villa.

It was quite an interesting change of scenery.

They had lunch together, and then she returned to the Brooks Mansion with Percival.

Meanwhile, Cathy and the others returned to their respective cottages.

In the Northern Gardens in the Ellington Mansion.

Fiona Ellington was at her desk, sketching jewelry designs. The floor was littered with discarded drafts, and her cool face was tinged with frustration.

Suddenly, the door opened. Her room door was ajar, and she looked up to see Heloise entering with an

unhappy expression.

Without stopping her work, Fiona glanced at Heloise and asked, "Mom, weren't you going to see Percival's fiancée? Why are you back so soon?"

"Don't even get me started! I'm so annoyed!" Heloise threw her bag on the couch, sat down, and gulped down a whole lot of water.

"What happened?" Fiona looked at the completed sketch in front of her as her eyebrows knitted together.

She had been drawing all day, but something always felt missing.

She aspired to design a unique set of hand ornaments, but no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't surpass Master Jessica's Ophelia's Heart.

If only she knew Master Jessica, she would love to ask her what kind of inspiration led to such astonishing creativity.

"It's all because of your grandpa!" Heloise fumed. "He's so biased! He gave Percival 30 million to splurge on his fiancée! What's more infuriating is that Percival's fiancée is Scott Brooks' daughter, and

your grandpa is already spoiling him rotten. Now that he's engaged to her, it's nothing but a huge boost for him."

Heloise raved. "Once he spreads his wings, how is your brother, Jeffrey, supposed to seize the company from him?"

Fiona's eyes narrowed as a trace of mockery curled the corners of her lips.

Jeffrey Ellington, that waste, was thinking of wresting the company from Percival? He should take a good look at himself first.

She gathered her thoughts and gave her mom a faint smile. "They're just engaged, not married. It's still early days. Why are you so worked up, Mom?"

"Can I not be worked up?" Heloise asked anxiously. "Haven't you seen how Ryan's family is eyeing the position of successor? Especially that Paul! He's trying everything he can to worm his way into the company. But look at your brother! When your grandpa finally wants him to gain some experience in the company, he refuses!"

Just thinking about it made Heloise's blood pressure rise.

Fiona touched her lips with her finger but said nothing.

She looked at the failed draft in front of her and crumpled it up before throwing it away.

She refused to believe that she couldn't create a design better than Master Jessica's.

"But at least you've established yourself in the design department. As long as we can get the old man

to change his mind about the successor, our family still has a chance." Heloise mused to herself.

Fiona glanced at her. "Grandpa has already chosen Percival as his successor. How can he change his

mind so easily? Mom, I think you should stop worrying about this."

Everyone thought Percival was useless, but no one knew that not only was he not useless, but his

influence could easily crush the Ellington family.

What was the point of this superficial struggle?

Who could compete with Grandpa's favoritism towards Percival?

They were nothing more than clowns.

"Worry about what?" Jeffrey, who had been holed up in his room all day, was about to go out for a drink

when he heard Fiona.

"What else could I be worried about?" Heloise stood up and jabbed him in the forehead. "You spend all

day cooped up in your room, painting your silly little pictures. When Grandpa wanted you to go work at the company, you refused?! What do you think you're going to achieve with all this painting?"

"Mom, that's unfair!" Jeffrey protested. "What do you mean by 'silly little pictures'? They're my treasures!"

"What treasures? If you keep acting like a baby, the Ellington family will end up in Percival's hands. And where would that leave us?" Heloise's was laced with frustration as she mercilessly chided him.

"He wants to take over the Ellington Group? I'd like to see him try. He's a good-for-nothing, Heloise.

You honestly think he can take us to greater heights?" Jeffrey retorted with nonchalance.

As a child, Percival was quite the star. From elementary to high school, he always topped his class. He was the pride of the Ellington family.

But when he got into college, his grades plummeted. He barely managed to graduate, and that too was only after intense cramming under the pressure of his grandfather. He got his degree, but it was a close call.

Later, when his grandfather sent him to the company, he managed to ruin several projects. Left with no choice, his grandfather told him to stay home.

From then on, Percival was labeled as a good-for-nothing.

Little did they know, Jeffrey was secretly full of resentment.

So, he couldn't care less about Percival taking over the company. His concern was the two brothers of his eldest uncle, Ryan's family.

He didn't join the company just to let the Ryan's family lower their guard.

He spent his time painting, but he never stopped studying management.

"Jeffrey..."

Before Heloise could finish, Jeffrey interrupted her. "Enough. I have things to do. I'm going in."

Before Heloise could stop him, he had already closed the door.

Heloise pointed at the closed door and exclaimed, "He's going to be the death of me!"

Fiona glanced at her, put down her pen, and stood up. "I have some things to take care of. Don't wait for me at dinner."

With that, she grabbed her bag and left.

As the door closed behind her, Fiona's expression turned icy. She pulled out her cell phone and dialed

a number. "Why is he still alive?"

Fiona coldly cut off whatever the person on the other end was saying. "I don't want to hear excuses.

This time, I want him dead. Don't mess it up again and leave him half-dead!"

Chapter 266

The Brooks Mansion.

When Vivienne and Percival returned, the great hall of the mansion was filled with people.

The patriarch, Baron, sat at the head of the table, surrounded by members of the Brooks family.

Upon seeing the pair enter, Baron gestured towards them. "You two are just in time. Come and sit. We

have matters to discuss."

Vivienne nodded, taking a seat with Percival on the empty chairs to Baron's right.

Once everyone was present, Baron spoke, "Now that we've found Vivienne, it's time to organize a

reunion banquet. Scott, take care of it. Send out invitations far and wide, and ensure the feast is

grand."

Scott nodded. "I'm on it. The preparations have already begun."

Baron grunted in approval, then turned his gaze towards Vivienne. "If you have any friends you'd like to

invite, let your father know so he can send out the invitations promptly. The 15th is a good day, so we'll

have it then."

Today was the 10th, so that left five days.

"Alright." Vivienne had no objections.

"Do you have any requirements for your attire or jewelry?" Baron asked next.

He was aware that Vivienne was a top-tier fashion designer.

Her designs were unparalleled; even the best designers they could hire couldn't come close.

"I'll take care of my dress and jewelry."

That was the expected answer, so Baron just nodded. "Alright. Then it's settled."

Once that was sorted, Baron turned his attention to Percival. His gaze had grown increasingly

disdainful, but he continued nonetheless. "Although you two are engaged, her immediate family wasn't

involved. You'll have to go back and talk to your grandfather, so you can ask him to organize an

engagement party for you two in Rivenwood."

In Havenwood, the engagement party was hosted by the bride's family.

But in Rivenwood, both the engagement and wedding parties were the groom's responsibility.

"My grandfather has already arranged it." Percival replied calmly. "If all goes well, it should be the day after tomorrow."

His engagement to Vivienne was already official. There was no need for another ceremony.

But his grandfather just wanted to host a party to introduce Vivienne to the other major families.

Upon hearing this, Baron huffed. "Richard, that old man, always trying to one-up me!"

He then turned to Scott. "You need to speed things up. Have the family reunion banquet tomorrow."

Scott fell silent.

Was this a casual dinner at a restaurant?

Can we just decide this on a whim?

He felt guilty for having mistaken another girl for Vivienne and had planned to make up for it with a

grand family reunion banquet. The scale of the banquet couldn't be any less than what was planned for

Arabella.

If they rushed it and had it tomorrow, how could it be grand?

Even the world-renowned figures he had invited might not be able to make it in time.

Scott rubbed his temples in frustration. "Percival, could you ask your grandfather to postpone your

family's party by a few days? There's no need for another engagement party. The one hosted by her foster parents counts. Just a simple party will do."

Percival's lips twitched upwards slightly as he replied, "This would be the first party we host for Vivienne, and you want it to be simple?"

Given the competitive tension between his grandfather and Baron, there was no way the party would be anything less than grand.

Scott was truly at a loss.

Did Richard have to compete with them?

Did he have to compare everything?

Seeing that the tension was rising, Timothy quickly intervened. "Let's leave the parties to the respective families. We just need the Ellingtons to postpone theirs a bit. Percival, let your grandfather know that he should host the feast after our family reunion banquet."

"Alright." Percival didn't argue.

With that settled, Baron glanced at Percival, speaking in a neutral tone. "Pack your things and head

back to the Ellington residence later. It won't do Vivienne's reputation any good if people find out you're living together."

Percival was speechless.

He knew it.

These fools were up to no good.

A moment later, he nodded. "Alright."

His presence there was preventing certain foxes from showing their true colors.

Afterward, Baron inquired about the company's affairs.

With Scott at the helm of the Brooks family, he was responsible for the company's affairs, but most of his duties were delegated to Ronald.

Ronald was a prodigy since he joined the company at a young age. Even before finding Vivienne, Scott had treated Ronald like a son and intentionally groomed him to be his successor.

Ronald briefed the old man on the company's current state of affairs, to which he expressed satisfaction.

Despite relinquishing his position as head of the family, he still needed to keep tabs on the family's

affairs.

"Dad, should we invite the Miller family to the family reunion banquet?" Melissa suddenly asked.

Baron banned Paula from returning home, but the Miller family was still related to the Brooks through marriage. There were some mutual interests between the two families as well.

If the head of the Brooks family was hosting a family reunion feast for his biological daughter, it was only natural to notify all the major families. If they purposely left out the Miller family, it might look bad.

Baron's aged eyes narrowed slightly, then he turned to Vivienne. "Vivienne, what do you think?"

Vivienne's lips curved into a slight smile. "If I say don't invite them, will you agree?"

Baron was taken aback. He met Vivienne's cold gaze, feeling like she could see right through him.

He shifted his gaze, falling silent for a moment before speaking. "In the business world, the Millers and us have ongoing projects together. It's alright if you don't invite Paula, but the head of the Miller family must be invited."

In the circles of the truly wealthy, which family could exist in isolation?

Every family, more or less, had interests intertwined with others.

It was just a matter of degree.

He might not care about Paula, but he couldn't ignore the collaboration between the two companies.

The Hawthorns were an old-money family, so he always had to consider their long-term development.

A deeper smile crept onto Vivienne's face.

See!

No matter how nice they sound, their actions reveal their true intentions. They always gave off the

illusion that they adored her.

Unfortunately, she was not a naive little girl like Arabella.

She was not that ignorant.

Vivienne turned her gaze to Scott, waiting for his opinion.

Scott felt a jolt in his heart as he met her gaze, and he instinctively explained, "Vivienne, the

collaboration between us and the Millers involves billions of dollars."

He didn't need to spell it out. He knew Vivienne would understand.

Vivienne raised an eyebrow, her smile becoming more ruthless. "I see! Well then invite them?"

In her time with the Brooks, she hadn't probed deep into the past, but she could read a lot from their

attitudes.

She began to understand why her mother had fled on her wedding day.

Scott?

Was he worthy?

If it had been Dorian making this decision, he would have rejected inviting the Millers without hesitation.

Despite his weakness, Dorian could unabashedly protect her, even though he was a person with no

blood ties to her.

What should she do?

Suddenly, she found herself missing Dorian.

She still owed him a 'Dad.'

Chapter 267

Vivienne was in a foul mood. She paid no attention to the conversation happening around her.

She stood up, her voice as cold as ice as she said, "I'm tired. I'm heading to my room."

With that, she turned and left.

"I'll walk with you." Percival stood and followed as his hand found hers in a couple of strides.

Her fingers were icy. They felt like a winter's frostbite that pierced her to the bone.

They walked in silence.

Upon reaching her room, Vivienne paused and turned to Percival. "Mr. Wolf, pack up and head back to the Ellingtons. I have some matters to tend to."

Percival's deep and narrow gaze lingered on her face. He pressed his lips together and was silent for a moment before he slowly said, "Alright."

He didn't offer her any words of comfort. He knew she didn't need them.

He also knew that in her heart, the Brooks family meant nothing to her.

She wasn't upset, but rather, she felt sorry for her mother.

Percival returned to his room, collected his luggage, and left.

He traveled light with only a single suitcase in hand.

After he left, Vivienne's gaze softened, and she returned to her room.

As soon as she entered, the phone rang.

It was Matthew.

"Vivienne, I've arrived in Rivenwood." Matthew said. "I just settled down. I'm not far from the Brooks Mansion."

"Alright." Vivienne replied. "How are things going?"

"All sorted. Everyone's settled in. The Frostfire Intelligence Agency is up and running. The order system just went live, and we already have a request."

Vivienne raised an eyebrow. "Oh? What did they offer?"

"They have cobra grass and want boar poison. They want to trade in person."

Vivienne paused. "Are you sure it's cobra grass?"

"Positive. I saw the picture." Matthew hesitated. "But Vivienne, could this be a trap? You just announced that you needed cobra grass, and someone instantly offered it. It feels sketchy. Maybe we should let this one slide."

"Take it!" Vivienne's eyes narrowed slightly. "Where's the trade taking place?"

"Spring Club."

"Alright. Tell them I'm on my way."

Matthew wanted to persuade her otherwise, but upon seeing her resolve, he knew it was futile, so he

simply said, "Understood."

Vivienne hung up and rummaged through her bag for a small ceramic bottle. She always carried a bit of poison with her when she left the house.

Boar poison... She hardly ever used it.

For one, this poison didn't immobilize people like her soft bone powder did, and secondly, its effects took longer to kick in. If her life was in danger, nothing was as potent as her shadow venom.

But who would want boar poison?

This poison was created by her mother, who lost the last bottle of it before her death. That bottle of boar poison was also used on Isolde in the past.

Vivienne's gaze hardened. She fell silent for a moment, then tucked the boar poison into her bag, got up, opened the door, and left.

Boar poison, though not as potent as her shadow venom, was incredibly vexing. Her mother had intended to destroy it.

However, she ended up mastering it.

She didn't want to trade the boar poison, but cobra grass was very important to her.

When Vivienne left, the Brook Mansion's main hall was empty.

Everyone was probably resting after lunch.

Vivienne didn't bother telling anyone she was leaving. She hailed a cab and headed for Spring Club.

As she sat in the car, Vivienne rested her chin on her hand with her arm propped against the window.

Perhaps it was time to get a car? Hailing cabs was becoming a nuisance.

The car arrived at Spring Club in no time.

As soon as Vivienne got out of the car, a text from Matthew appeared on her phone. "Your contact has already arrived. They are in the Spring Pavilion."

Vivienne raised an eyebrow. That was quick.

She pocketed her phone and walked into the club.

The Spring Club was an upscale establishment. It was renowned for its hot springs.

Most of the wealthy and influential enjoyed soaking in the springs here.

The private chef here was also exceptional. He was rumored to be a direct descendant of royal chefs.

However, to enter, you needed a membership card.

Vivienne walked to the reception, pulled a card from her bag, and handed it to the receptionist.

The receptionist blinked at the card before exclaiming, "Diamond membership card?"

Spring Club memberships were tiered.

There were regular, intermediate, advanced, and diamond memberships.

Regular memberships were white, intermediate memberships were blue, and advanced memberships were black, but diamond memberships were gold.

Each membership tier had different spending levels.

More importantly, the membership represented status.

Spring Club staff were instructed about the different membership cards when they started, particularly the diamond membership card, which they were told to remember clearly.

If a diamond member came, they were to be treated with the utmost respect.

Because there were only two people with diamond memberships.

The receptionist had been working at Spring Club since it opened and had only seen the diamond membership card during training. She had never seen an actual diamond member.

So, she was a bit taken aback.

Vivienne nodded. "Please take me to the Spring Pavilion."

The receptionist was snapped back to reality by Vivienne's voice, quickly replying, "Please follow me!"

Throughout the walk, the receptionist kept sneaking glances at Vivienne. She couldn't believe that someone so young held a diamond membership.

Vivienne stood to the side of the reception desk, taking in the grandeur of the establishment.

The Spring Club was massive. It was marketed as a club, but it was more akin to a sprawling estate.

Apart from the hot springs, it housed many other attractions.

However, Vivienne never bothered to find out what they were.

The scenery was spectacular, though. A sense of tranquility washed over her as she strolled down the hallway.

After being led around several buildings, the receptionist finally ushered Vivienne into a courtyard adorned with a faux mountain. "Miss, we have arrived."

Vivienne hummed in acknowledgement. "Thank you."

The receptionist paused and was completely taken aback. In all her time working here, she never had a

customer thank her.

She looked up and flashed Vivienne a sweet smile. "It's my pleasure. If you need anything, don't hesitate to ask."

Vivienne nodded and, as if she had suddenly remembered something, said, "Please don't disclose any information about this membership card to anyone."

The receptionist blinked before quickly nodding in agreement. "Of course, Miss."

Once the receptionist left, Vivienne turned to face the closed door. She pulled out a golden mask from her purse, adorned it, and then knocked on the door.

"Enter."

A cool, feminine voice echoed from within.

Vivienne was momentarily taken aback.

A woman?

Upon entering, she saw a woman garbed in traditional national attire sitting at a table in the center of the room. The woman wore a silver half-mask, so only her luscious lips were visible.

The woman poured coffee with practiced grace and eloquent elegance.

She looked up at Vivienne, who was standing in the doorway, as her expression flickered with surprise before she offered a coy smile. "I never expected the founder of the nationally renowned Frostfire Intelligence Agency to be a woman."

Vivienne met her gaze and calmly replied, "I didn't expect the one who wanted the boar poison to be a woman either."

The woman smirked and gestured for Vivienne to sit. "Have a seat."

She placed a freshly brewed cup of coffee in front of Vivienne, wasting no time in getting down to business. "Did you bring what I asked for?"

Chapter 268

Vivienne's pale fingers lightly tapped the table as she placed a bottle of rare boar poison in front of her.

With an indifferent tone, she asked, "What about the cobra grass?"

"Of course, I brought it." The woman's scarlet lips curved into a seductive smile. From a vintage bag resting on the nearby couch, she reached in and pulled out a red box. As she lifted the lid, an air-dried, deep purple plant was revealed.

Vivienne's calm gaze landed on the cobra grass, but she made no move to pick it up.

The woman's eyes swept over Vivienne's golden mask, showing a hint of surprise. Boar poison was rare, but cobra grass was even rarer. She had thought Vivienne, who was so desperate for the cobra grass, would be impatient.

"It's yours now." She grinned generously and pushed the red box towards Vivienne.

Vivienne then picked up the cobra grass to inspect it before tossing the bottle of boar poison at the woman.

Caught off guard, the woman scrambled to catch it. Annoyed, she challenged Vivienne. "My cobra grass is definitely authentic. Are you sure your boar poison isn't fake?"

"Do you want me to test it on you?" Vivienne lifted her eyes as her icy gaze landed on the woman.

The woman froze; she was deeply intimidated by Vivienne's stare. It seemed as if Vivienne would not hesitate to use the poison on her if she said another word.

After confirming that the cobra grass was genuine, Vivienne didn't return it to the box. Instead, she placed it in a prepared plastic bag, wrapped it carefully in cotton, and put it into her bosom.

Then she tossed the red box towards the woman's silver mask.

"You... you're so rude!" The woman was taken aback. She couldn't understand why she had been repeatedly offended during her first interaction with Vivienne. She attempted to stand up in anger, but suddenly found herself unable to move or speak.

Vivienne stood up and looked at the woman, who was paralyzed and speechless. She said coldly,

"Who gave you the audacity to hide a tracker in my stuff?"

The woman's eyes widened in fear.

She was regretting her decision to mess with the Frostfire Intelligence Agency. It was once the largest intelligence organization in Veridia, so Frostfire had all-encompassing influences all over the world.

They had no qualms about selling information, as long as the price was right.

But a decade ago, Frostfire suddenly vanished, leaving no trace behind.

Unexpectedly, they had recently regrouped.

After Frostfire's information system was exposed, many people became alarmed. Several of them were willing to pay a high price for information.

Even more disturbing, no one could identify any of Frostfire's members.

This caused many to be wary, including her.

She was rich, but Percival was richer. If she could buy rare boar poison from Frostfire, then Percival might be able to buy evidence from Frostfire of her, Fiona's, betrayal of him and Isolde.

Knowing that she was dealing with Frostfire's leader, Fiona had tried to pry into Frostfire's secrets.

"You must think you're clever." Vivienne looked at Fiona with scorn. She had detected the tracker as soon as she walked into the room. When Fiona pulled out the box, she knew something was up.

"This time, I'll let you off lightly because of the cobra grass. Next time, you won't be so lucky."

Without another word, she left the room, not even bothering to reveal Fiona's face behind the silver mask.

To the Frostfire Intelligence Agency, most people held no secrets.

Rather than caring about the face behind the silver mask, Vivienne's thoughts had already returned to her research.

Her last study resulted in the creation of an antidote for the poison used by GTO's men. It had been tested on the two assassins who had infiltrated Tranquil Estates in Havenwood. The antidote had effectively reduced their enhanced physical abilities caused by the poison, and they did not die

immediately.

But the poison had severely damaged their bodies, and they had died a few days later.

Therefore, she adjusted the antidote's formula and dosage. The cobra grass was crucial to her new formula.

Just as Vivienne walked out of the Spring Pavilion, an attendant was passing by. She stopped her.

"Wait."

The attendant stopped immediately, waiting respectfully for Vivienne's instructions.

Inside the Spring Pavilion, Fiona was stiffly seated on the couch, watching the door that Vivienne had closed. Worry filled her mind as she wondered about when she would be able to move again.

She then heard Vivienne's cold voice outside the door, giving instructions to an attendant. "I'm reserving this suite for three days. No one is allowed to enter or clean it during this period."

Fiona's eyes widened in shock.

Three days?!

She'd be trapped in this suite, unable to move for three days?! She wouldn't even be able to eat or drink, let alone use the bathroom!

Fiona regretted her actions deeply. She shouldn't have tried to outsmart Vivienne, the leader of the Frostfire Intelligence Agency.

Three days later.

News that the Brooks family was planning a family reunion banquet for Scott's newly found daughter was the talk of the town among the elite families of Rivenwood.

Those who had attended Arabella's reunion banquet found the news puzzling. Hadn't they just hosted one? How could there be another?

Some, aware of the truth, avoided discussing the Brooks family's embarrassing runaround with Arabella. Others assumed they were planning a redo for Arabella.

The only ones who knew that Vivienne was Scott's real daughter were a few close families.

...

Pendleton Hospital.

Calista had just finished a medical check-up on Tristan. As she was about to leave, Tristan stopped

her. "Calista, is Vivienne really my foster father's biological daughter?"

"Yes." Calista responded softly. A flicker of discomfort crossed her face at the very mention of Vivienne's name.

Tristan looked dazed. This news was new to him as well.

He had always thought that Arabella was his benefactor's daughter, so he had defended her at all costs. In the process, he had offended Vivienne and Percival, which had led to his current condition of being bedridden and helpless.

And now they were telling him that Vivienne was his benefactor's real daughter?!

He was overwhelmed by a mix of emotions, unsure of how to handle this revelation. He had repeatedly shamed, and even intended to harm his benefactor's daughter for an impostor. The shame made him wish the ground would swallow him up.

He couldn't help but feel grateful. Even though he was confined to a hospital bed and unable to return to the Brooks Mansion, he still felt happy to be there. He didn't know how he would face Vivienne otherwise.

He had blamed Percival for his condition, even cursing Percival and Vivienne in his heart. But now, he felt he deserved what had happened to him.

He really deserved to end up like this.

Chapter 269

Calista watched Tristan's expression with a slight frown on her face. She had a rare softness in her voice as she comforted him. "You shouldn't linger on past events. None of it was your fault. It's Arabella who should be blamed for deceiving and using you, right?"

"Besides, you've already paid the price for your poor judgement. It wasn't your fault. Vivienne should forgive you if she's reasonable enough."

"Really?" Tristan gazed blankly at Calista, finding his heart fluttering no matter how he looked at her.

"Absolutely." Calista replied with a faint smile, her voice laced with charm. "I believe Vivienne will forgive you. After all, she is your savior's daughter, and your savior was such a good person, wasn't she?"

With that, she left Tristan's hospital room with her iPad, leaving him alone to contemplate.

Calista had seen Vivienne's temper and knew she wouldn't easily forgive Tristan. So, she planted a seed in Tristan's mind early on, aiming to create a larger rift between the two of them in the future.

Although Tristan was now practically disabled, he still had some worth. If he treated Vivienne like he did

Arabella, allowing Vivienne to manipulate him, Calista wouldn't be happy.

After leaving Tristan's room, Calista didn't return to her office. Instead, she went to Paula's room.

Inside, Mila was peeling an apple while trying to reason with Paula. "I think you should stop being stubborn. Your husband, Mark Miller, has taken his illegitimate son, Aaron Miller, back home. How can you still stay in the hospital?"

"That bastard! I can't believe he actually did it!" Paula gritted her teeth in anger.

Aaron was the child of Mark and his ex-fiancée, Jasmine, whose relationship Paula had forcibly ended.

The story of Aaron's birth was a bit complicated.

After Jasmine left Mark in anger and moved abroad, she discovered she was pregnant. She couldn't bear to abort the child and gave birth to a daughter, Fleur Miller.

But fate was never kind to her. When Fleur was seven years old, she was diagnosed with leukemia and needed a bone marrow transplant. Jasmine had no choice but to ask Mark for help.

Mark did more than just get tested himself. He also had Eddy and other members of the Miller family tested, but none matched Fleur's marrow type.

Despite knowing her actions were unethical, Jasmine begged Mark to give her another child. If the

child's blood matched, she could save Fleur. Thus, Aaron was born.

Unfortunately, although Aaron's blood matched Fleur's, she passed away due to a severe rejection reaction after the operation.

In the following years, Jasmine developed severe depression due to the death of her daughter and committed suicide when Aaron was ten years old.

Mark brought Aaron back from abroad. Due to Paula's strong objections, he was raised outside the family and was not recognized as a Miller.

But this time, due to the embarrassment caused by Eddy's live stream, Mark took the opportunity to bring Aaron back to the Miller family and announce him as a potential successor.

This infuriated Paula, and despite her dramatic reactions, she ended up faking illness and being hospitalized.

Three days into her hospital stay, only her son Eddy had visited her. Nobody else from the Miller family came, reportedly because Mark ordered them not to. Naturally, Mark himself didn't visit.

To add insult to injury, Mark let Aaron move into the Miller Mansion while she was away. He even

cleared out the best room for him.

Paula's plan to fake an illness had backfired spectacularly. But she couldn't just stop halfway and slink home.

"It's all because of your newly recognized niece." Mila sympathetically handed Paula the peeled apple slices. "If it weren't for her insisting on Eddy fulfilling his bet, Mark wouldn't have had an excuse."

"It's all that damned Vivienne's fault!" Paula seethed at the mention of this.

Eddy had always been mediocre. He was not favored by the Miller family elders or the company's board of directors. But because everyone thought Mark only had him as a son and he had the backing of the Brooks family, they reluctantly supported him.

This led to Eddy becoming arrogant, thinking he was some kind of prodigy. He always liked to compete with others and dabbled in obscure interests, like gemstone gambling.

If it weren't for him winning 300 million for the family with his gemstone, he might not have gotten over the live stream incident.

However, his inappropriate behavior and the fact that his live stream video was secretly recorded and circulated privately made it hard for people to accept him as the next head of the Miller family. This

gave Mark the excuse to make Aaron, his illegitimate son, a candidate for succession.

All of this was Vivienne's fault!

Fortunately, Aaron was even less dedicated to his work than Eddy. While Eddy may have earned the

Miller family 300 million casually through gemstone gambling, Aaron was completely devoted to E-

Sports. He became a professional player at fifteen and didn't even finish college.

This was the only thing that comforted Paula.

"Word around town is that the Brooks family is throwing a big party for their newly found daughter in a

couple of days." Mila's eyes twinkled as she turned to Paula. "But I heard a rumor that when the

invitation was sent to the Miller family, it specifically said you weren't invited. What's up with that?"

"I have no idea what the old man is thinking!" Paula's face darkened noticeably. "I've been his daughter

for over forty years, and now he's shutting me out of the family for some girl he's just acknowledged.

I'm not even allowed to attend this party?! I mean, I'm Vivienne's aunt for crying out loud!"

"I'm guessing it wasn't Baron's idea, but probably Vivienne's." Calista said while stepping into the

hospital room.

“After all, she knows exactly how horrible she’s been to Eddy. I’m guessing she thinks you might cause a scene at the party to get back at her.”

Calista chuckled lightly. “She’s really underestimating you, Paula. You’re far too classy for such antics.”

Paula’s gaze flickered, but she stayed silent.

“Dr. Pendleton.”

At that moment, someone called out to Calista from the doorway of the hospital room. She turned to see a young man with a bruised face.

Chapter 270

After she turned her around, the young man couldn’t help but break into a hearty laugh. “Dr. Pendleton, your medical skills are impeccable. I thought I’d be bedridden for at least a couple of weeks after that beating I took. But after your treatment, I’m up and about today.”

“Even with the best medical skills, your body can’t handle continuous reckless behavior. Don’t be so rash next time.” Calista warned him casually. “I can’t believe you meddled in Tam’s affairs. You even live streamed it. Look at where that got you.”

“But I gained a lot of popularity because of it.” The young man stuck out his tongue at Calista in a playful manner, showing her his phone. “Look, I’ve got a million followers now. That beating was worth

it."

Calista simply shook her head as the young man left, chuckling.

"That guy..." Paula asked in surprise. "Isn't he the one who live streamed Tam's mistress scandal?"

"Yep." Calista answered nonchalantly. "He's a popular live streamer known as Stardust. He's quite the daredevil."

"These internet celebrities would do anything for fame. Last time, when Tam's fifth wife was ganged up on by the other four for feeling left out, Stardust sneaked in and live streamed the whole thing. He got seriously injured and was sent here."

"He's so bold enough to live stream anything?" Paula's eyes sparkled with intrigue.

"Yes. Anything." Calista answered, "He once told me about a celebrity who drugged her rival to create a scandal. He was going to live stream it but got beaten to the punch."

"I see." Paula munched on an apple, not asking any further.

Calista exchanged a knowing glance with Mila.

Two hours later.

Fiona was walking weakly in the hospital garden. The memories of being trapped for three days in the Spring Pavilion by the woman in a golden mask were still fresh in her mind.

When the resort staff found her three days later, she was severely dehydrated, starved, and had lost control of her bodily functions. It was a complete mess. If it weren't for her mask and her refusal to let them take it off, she would have died of shame.

It was her subordinates who finally received the message and secretly brought her to the hospital. She could never forget their faces as they tried so hard to hide their amusement.

It was clear that the Frostfire Intelligence Agency was behind the whole ordeal. She decided she would never cross paths with them again.

At least she managed to get her hands on the boar poison.

Last time, Isolde took the hit for Percival. This time, he wouldn't be so lucky.

But before that, she had to take care of one person, Vivienne.

She knew that it was Vivienne who had cured Isolde of the boar poison. So Percival's fiancée had to go.

Suddenly, she heard two people talking from behind a holly bush.

"Is it true that the Brooks family's newly recognized daughter could cause such a scene at her reunion banquet?"

"Yes. She's a country bumpkin. She is very crude and has no respect for decorum."

Fiona recognized the two people talking. One was a young man she didn't know, and the other was Paula.

She listened quietly.

"You don't need to do anything." Paula told Stardust. "I'll have the pinhole cameras installed. All you need to do is live stream the footage. Simple."

"Okay, sure." Stardust nodded. Although he had just been hospitalized for live streaming a scandal, he knew they were nothing compared to the prestigious Brooks family.

After hearing Paula and Stardust's conversation, Fiona turned off her phone's recording function and quietly slunk away. It seemed like the Brooks family had its own problems, and Vivienne's life wasn't as smooth as she thought.

...

Two days later.

Vivienne's reunion banquet was held at the luxurious Yette Palace Hotel's top-floor banquet hall in Rivenwood.

The Brooks family took this banquet very seriously, especially after the scandal involving the fake Arabella.

The hospitality the Brooks family showed today was completely different from what they showcased at Arabella's reunion banquet in Havenwood.

At that time, the Brooks family, with their high status, let Arabella greet the guests alone. But this time, it was the complete opposite.

Judith and Baron played host in the grand ballroom, while Vivienne secluded herself in the lounge, waiting to make her grand debut when she was formally introduced to the guests.

By the time the Ellington family arrived, the ballroom was bustling with guests. Richard took a glance around the room as a satisfied grunt escaped his lips. "At least they haven't disgraced Vivienne this time."

He then turned to Percival, who was trailing behind him. "Your engagement party must be grander than

this, understood? We can't be outdone!"

"Richard, have you lost your marbles?" Baron retorted angrily as his mustache quivered in indignation.

"Must you always compete with me? Have I stolen your wife or desecrated your ancestors' graves?"

"Steal my wife? You couldn't even manage that when we were young, let alone now when you're

knocking on heaven's door! Even if you did try, you'd never succeed!" Richard haughtily huffed. "As for

desecrating my ancestors' graves, try me."

"You!" Baron was so choked with rage that he was rendered speechless.

"Scott, where's Vivienne?" Percival asked, ignoring the heated exchange between the two old men.

"She's still getting ready in the lounge." Scott responded.

"I'll go see her then." Percival had been finding it hard to see Vivienne lately. Each time he tried to visit,

Baron would find a way to make things difficult for him.

Sure enough, just as he was about to step forward, Baron, who had been seething with fury at

Richard's taunts, swiftly blocked his path. "It's not right for a young man and woman to be alone

together!"