

Million-Dollar 341

Chapter 341

After Vivienne had spoken, the entire Brooks family fell into a deafening silence. The quiet was so intense that one could have heard a pin drop.

At the entrance of the Brooks Mansion, Scott's foot had barely crossed the threshold when he froze.

After a moment, he collected himself and strode towards Vivienne. His voice was low and angry as he asked, "Vivienne! What kind of nonsense are you spouting? How could Ms. Pendleton possibly be my daughter?"

Since Vivienne had joined the Brooks family, Scott had never raised his voice to her. But this time, he was genuinely angry. How could she joke about something like this? He and Mila had never been involved. How could they have a child together?

Calista and Mila were stunned into silence. It was Calista who recovered first. Her voice was a ragged shout as she yelled, "You're lying! Vivienne, I know you hate me, but how could you slander me like this?"

She was Scott's daughter? What kind of joke was that? She would love to be Scott's daughter. Having the Brooks family name would make it much easier for her to marry Percival, wouldn't it? But she

wasn't. She was William's daughter.

Mila remained silent. There was a flicker of panic in her eyes. She didn't know what to say.

Judith was quick to regain her composure, hastily saying, "Yes, Vivienne, how can you joke about something like this? Your father and Mila have never had anything going on. All these years, his heart has only held your mother!"

The rest of the Brooks family stared at them. Everyone was shocked and confused; no one said a word. They simply didn't know what to say.

Kala gaped at Calista, then at Scott, before bursting out in laughter. "This is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard!"

William was also shocked. He looked at Vivienne in disbelief. He knew Vivienne well, and he knew she wouldn't joke about something like this. He whipped his head around to glare at Mila as a great fury welled up within him. "Mila! You lied to me!"

Mila was startled by his shout, but she quickly regained her composure. "Who lied to you? Don't listen to Vivienne's nonsense! Calista is your daughter!"

"You had the guts to lie to me?!" William glared at her. "If you hadn't done this, my teacher wouldn't have said so! Tell me, what exactly is going on?"

Ridiculous! He had been raising someone else's daughter for over twenty years?!

Mila, struggling to her feet, shouted, "I've said it! Vivienne is talking nonsense! Why would you believe this young brat over me?!"

"She's my teacher! And you're my ex-wife!" William shouted back. "I should trust you? What have you done to deserve my trust? Don't forget, it was you who schemed to get involved with me, and after just one time, you got pregnant!"

William's anger grew. "I get it now! No wonder you were so eager to marry me back then; you were planning on making me wear the cuckold hat all along, weren't you, Mila?! You and Scott have no shame. You carried on behind my back and made me raise your daughter!"

Scott frowned. His voice was low and stern as he cautioned him. "Dr. Pendleton, watch your tone!"

William ignored him and began speaking with clear sarcasm. "Scott, you're a member of the prestigious Brooks family, the second most influential in Rivenwood. You should be ashamed of yourself for doing such a thing!"

He turned to Mila. "And you! Your family, the Clarks, is also a respectable family. How could you do such a thing?!"

Mila was furious. "I've said it! Calista isn't Scott's daughter! It's all Vivienne talking nonsense! You're making a fool of yourself!"

"You're the fool!" William retorted. "You say my teacher is talking nonsense? Fine, let's take a paternity test! We'll see if Calista is my daughter or not."

With that, he grabbed Calista's arm and strode towards the door.

Seeing this, Mila rushed forward to stop him. "No! We're not taking a test!"

She yanked Calista away from William and yelled as her voice choked with tears. "William, you're heartless! Your daughter is so filial to you, yet you're willing to drag her into this because of some outsider's words! You're so disappointing!"

She turned to glare at Vivienne. "Vivienne! What grudge do you have against me and Calista that you would go so far to harm her?!" She screamed in a shrill voice.

"I know you've always been uncomfortable with the relationship between me and your father, but you're

being too selfish! Your father has been waiting for your mother for so many years; doesn't he deserve to have a new family?! It's clear that you're targeting us just to prevent your father from starting a new family. You're simply too malicious!"

Scott's expression darkened. "Ms. Clark, watch what you say. Apart from our families being old friends, there's nothing else between us."

Mila felt a sharp pain in her chest. "Scott, why are you playing dumb? Everyone knows how I feel about you and that it's only a matter of time before we get married. Why can't you admit it?"

With that, she glared at Vivienne. "It's all because of you! You see, your father won't even acknowledge our relationship!"

Vivienne, lounging in her chair, gave her a lazy glance. Then she rose and went upstairs.

Soon, she came back down, holding a manila envelope.

She tossed the envelope in front of William and said coldly, "Look for yourself."

William opened the envelope and pulled out the documents inside.

On it, in bold letters, was the phrase "Paternity Test."

And the final line, "No Biological Relation," was a dagger to William's eyes.

There were two documents in total in the envelope. He opened the other one. It was a paternity test between Scott and Calista.

The final line read, "Biological Relation Confirmed, Probability 99.99%."

William was instantly livid. He threw the paternity test results in front of Mila. "Still making excuses?!"

Scott and Calista are biologically related! Take a good look!"

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The Brooks family was left utterly speechless.

They thought Vivienne was just rambling nonsensically.

But now, the paternity test confirmed it.

How could this be?

Everyone's gaze was drawn to Scott.

Scott's face darkened like a stormy sky. He stepped forward to pick up the paternity test results, but

Mila beat him to it, ready to rip it to shreds.

But suddenly, she was immobilized.

As she was wondering why, Vivienne spoke. "You can easily forge a paternity test, but it costs money

to do a real one. I spent money on this one, so if you want to rip it, you better pay me back."

Mila was about to retort, but Scott swiftly stepped in and snatched the test from her hands.

The moment he confirmed that Calista was indeed his child, his demeanor changed drastically. He

threw the paper at Mila, furious. "What the hell is going on?!"

He knew perfectly well that he had never been involved with Mila.

Nor had he been manipulated into a relationship with her without his knowledge.

Yet Calista was his child?!

It was incredibly shocking!

He didn't doubt the authenticity of the paternity test because it bore the official seal of the state.

And the results were just a week old.

Judith couldn't believe what she was hearing. She went over and took a look at the paternity test,

almost losing her balance in the process.

Carl steadied her.

Once Judith had regained her composure, she turned to Mila. "Aren't you going to tell the truth? Speak!

Why is Calista Scott's daughter? What have you been hiding from us?"

Mila knew she could no longer hide the truth and let out a loud scream. "Ahhh!!!"

After venting her frustration, Mila lifted her head and gave Scott a sinister smile. "Yes! Calista is your daughter! Surprised? Wondering how we have a child when we were never involved?"

Scott just stared at her coldly, waiting for her to continue.

William felt a heavy weight on his chest. He was finding it difficult to stand.

Seeing this, Kala quickly brought a chair for him to sit on.

"Scott! I loved you so much! I put my pride aside and did everything to please you. But all you saw was

Karen! You never even smiled at me because of her. I hated her and wanted her dead! But I found something even more painful than death for her. Carrying your child!"

Mila suddenly found herself able to move. She walked towards Scott as her eyes filled with deep emotion. "I tried many ways, but you were so infatuated with Karen that I couldn't get close to you. I wanted to drug you, but your dear sister stopped me."

Scott frowned. "Paula?"

"Correct!" Mila smirked proudly. "Paula told me that the Brooks men, to ensure the lineage of the family,

save their prime sperm at a young age. She stole your sperm and gave it to me for artificial

insemination!"

"Luckily, I succeeded on the first try." Mila said. "Initially, I wanted to use the child to force you to marry

me, but then I saw you with Karen... I hated you both! I wanted you to suffer! So, I took the child and

quickly married William! I thought you would marry Karen soon, and I had planned to kill Karen at your

wedding. But to my surprise, you took three years to get married."

Mila sneered at Vivienne.

"I waited so long for an opportunity to kill her with a paternity test, but she fled before the wedding."

The more Judith heard, the angrier she became. She pointed at Mila as her voice shook with rage.

"You... You wanted to manipulate Scott like this?!"

"It's his own fault! I am excellent in every aspect! How am I inferior to Karen? Why would he choose

Karen over me? Why is Karen still in his heart after all these years? I can't accept it! If I can't have him,

no one else can!"

Scott stared coldly at Mila. Suddenly, he felt a cold gaze on him. He turned and met Vivienne's icy eyes. His heart skipped a beat. "Vivienne..."

He wanted to explain, but he lacked the courage.

Although it wasn't his fault, he had been careless and allowed Paula to steal his sperm.

Vivienne gave him a disinterested glance and ignored him.

William clutched his chest as he struggled to breathe. "If you wanted to marry Scott so badly, why didn't you tell us the truth when he failed to get married? If you had told us then, when Calista was only three, you could have easily married him! Instead, you let me raise your child for all these years! You're despicable!" He was glaring at her furiously.

Despite his lack of affection for Mila, he doted on Calista and taught her everything he knew.

The Pendleton family may not have been the most prestigious of the four prominent families of Rivenwood, but they were still a respectable family.

Calista, with her masters in medical research and the prestige of the Pendleton family, had a smooth and successful life.

But the child he devoted all his efforts to was someone else's.

How could he not be angry?

"That's because it was too late. If I had confessed everything, then neither the Pendleton nor the Clark families would have accepted us. My reputation would have been ruined, and my daughter would have been branded as an illegitimate child and subjected to ridicule."

Mila cast a loving glance at Calista. "I might have messed up my life, but I'll be damned if my daughter doesn't live in the spotlight! The Brooks are a fine family, but Scott doesn't love me. Even if I forced him into marrying me, he wouldn't treat my girl right.

But you, William, you're different. You'll pass on your medical expertise to Calista. She's the jewel of the Pendleton family. She'll get the kind of affection in the Pendleton family that the Brooks can't offer."

Mila had always understood that Scott's heart belonged exclusively to Karen.

Other than Karen's children, he didn't acknowledge anyone else.

Scott was a man who, when in love, was deeply passionate but could also be heartless. But his heartlessness was only towards women who were not Karen.

Even after all these years, she had never managed to win a place in Scott's heart.

William let out a self-deprecating laugh. "I've been a fool for all these years."

He rose wearily to his feet and bowed slightly to Vivienne. "I'm tired. I think I'll head home and rest. I'll visit you another day."

Vivienne gave him a glance. "Hmm."

After a pause, she added, "It wasn't your fault. Your first love has been waiting for you all these years.

She bore you a son."

William was taken aback. "What? She didn't get married?"

"Yes. She discovered she was pregnant after leaving you. She braved all odds to have the child and raised him." Vivienne stated slowly.

"Where is she? Where is my son?" William exclaimed as his voice filled with excitement.

In that moment, the pain of the past twenty years faded. It was replaced by the joy of learning that his first love had been waiting for him and had bore him a child.

"She's Mr. James' adopted daughter. Your son's name is Atticus, Mr. James' grandson."

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Hearing the news, William's heart was filled with excitement.

Professor James was the most prestigious scholar at Elite University, known for his philanthropy and

generous support for underprivileged students.

Living under his influence, the people he loved and his son would definitely be of good character as well.

He quickly turned to Vivienne, "Ma'am, can you take me to meet them?"

He was hesitant to show up uninvited, fearing it could startle them.

He knew that Professor James had been Vivienne's teacher at Elite University, which would surely smooth the way for their reconciliation.

"Go back and rest. I'll find you after I've sorted things out here," Vivienne replied.

Casting a glance at Mila and Calista, William's face fell. "Alright."

Did they think that getting on Vivienne's bad side would only result in a minor injury?

They really underestimated Vivienne!

Once William left, the Brooks household returned to its usual calm.

The younger generation exchanged glances, hesitant to speak.

Judith was so angry that she clutched at her chest, struggling to catch her breath.

Scott wore a cold expression, exuding an aura that was chilling and devouring.

The tension hung heavy in the air.

Seeing that the Brooks family remained silent, Mila finally spoke, "I had intended to keep this secret forever, but now that Vivienne has exposed it, it's time to settle things."

Mila looked straight at Scott, "You don't have to marry me, Scott, but you must acknowledge Calista!

My mistakes have nothing to do with her. She shouldn't pay for what I've done!

After today, all of Rivenwood will know that Calista is your daughter, which will bring dire effect to her reputation. If you disown her, it will ruin her life. You may be ruthless, Scott, but please, for the sake of our child, handle this matter responsibly."

Calista lay on the floor, utterly dumbfounded.

How could things have spiraled so out of control?

But for her, this was a good thing.

What mattered to her was not prestige or honor.

What mattered was having a social status that matched that of Percival's!

Only the heiress of the Brooks family could match the pedigree of the Ellington family!

"What a joke!" Kala retorted angrily. "Why should the Brooks family pay for your mistakes? Everyone in Rivenwood knows that Scott has always held Karen in his heart. If he acknowledges this girl as his daughter, that would put stigma on him."

She never liked Mila and her daughter.

But now, not only did she have to put up with them, they were actually trying to be acknowledged as part of the Brooks family?

This was just cramping her style.

And she really liked Vivienne.

She loathed Arabella when Scott mistakenly acknowledged her, and she hated Calista even more.

Vivienne was the only one she wanted to protect. She wouldn't let Calista come back and cause trouble for Vivienne.

"Kala! Watch your words!" Timothy, who had been silent until now, suddenly intervened.

They had no right to interfere with this matter.

The decision was ultimately up to Scott.

Kala wanted to argue, but she held her tongue on seeing Scott's stern expression.

"I will not acknowledge Calista!" Scott looked coldly at Mila and her daughter and said in an indifferent tone.

Although Mila had expected this outcome, she still felt a pang of sadness.

Scott was as cold and heartless as ever.

Even if she gave birth to his daughter, who was a girl of exceptional character, he was still too heartless to acknowledge her.

Calista looked up at Scott in disbelief. She never thought that he would refuse to acknowledge her.

"Why won't you acknowledge me?" Calista asked, staring into Scott's eyes. "I am your daughter and you should acknowledge me. Whatever happened between you and my mother, it's not my fault! Why should I be dragged into your adult affairs?"

Her voice grew louder and more emotional as she spoke, "Soon everyone will know that I'm not a Pendleton. What will people think of me if you refuse to acknowledge me?"

Scott listened to her accusations without showing any emotion.

"Dad!"

At that moment, Tristan appeared at the Brooks Mansion.

He was in a wheelchair and Ronald pushed him in.

Scott frowned when he saw him, "What are you doing here? I thought I told you to rest."

Tristan gave a bitter smile, "I'm already like this; resting won't do me any good. I heard there was trouble at home so I asked cousin Ronald to bring me back."

He could get off bed under Calista's treatment but he could just walk a few steps. Most of the time he was confined to bed.

Tristan glanced at Vivienne, then at Calista. After a moment of silence, he spoke up, "Dad, I admit that this is an eerie situation, but it's not Calista's fault. You can't let her bear the brunt of the scandal."

Scott frowned, "You don't need to worry about this."

Because of Karen, Scott had always been partial to Tristan.

But Tristan had offended Vivienne several times and suffered for it. So he had been disappointed in Tristan.

Now that Tristan was trying to meddle in this matter, Scott was not pleased.

Tristan lowered his gaze, "I know I'm just an adopted son and I shouldn't interfere. But...I love Calista! I want to marry her!"

"What?!" Scott was shocked!

Judith and the rest of the Brooks family were also stunned.

Even Mila and her daughter were unable to process the situation for some time.

Vivienne was the only one who remained unfazed. She looked at them indifferently with a faintly raised eyebrow.

Without further ado, Tristan struggled to get off his wheelchair, knelt on the floor, and pleaded earnestly,

"Dad, for the sake of my mom, please grant me this wish. I can give up the status of being the Brooks family's adopted son. I just want to marry Calista!"

The 'mom' he mentioned was Karen!

Karen was his savior, but after being adopted by Scott, he also started to call her mom.

Calista was taken aback for a while before she could react. She looked at Tristan with disdain.

Was that cripple adopted son really dreaming of marrying her?

That was just ludicrous!

But she knew that although Tristan was an adopted son, he held a significant place in Scott's heart. If

Scott agreed to Tristan's request, she could easily weasel her way back into the Brooks family.

Once she became the lady of the Brooks family, it would be a piece of cake to ruin her marriage with Tristan.

With this in mind, she looked up at Scott, "I like Tristan, too!"

"What the hell???" Kala exclaimed in shock.

Calista liked Tristan?

Was this some kind of joke?

This woman, who was always aiming for the stars, was set on marrying Percival. And how came that now she wanted to marry Tristan?

"You..." Scott was so angry that his chest hurt. He looked at Tristan and Calista and was unable to utter a word.

The atmosphere was tense for a long time until Scott sighed, "Fine! Children's debts are paid by their parents. Tomorrow, I will make an announcement recognizing Calista's identity, but Mila, you can forget

about ever marrying into the Brooks family!"

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Mila, for once, didn't have any objections.

Although she was eager to marry Scott, her daughter's well-being was her top priority.

If the Brooks family acknowledged Calista, she didn't care whether she married Scott or not. After all,

her daughter would share her gains with her in the future.

In particular, Vivienne would be out of the picture if Calista became Miss Brooks.

Percival would only belong to her daughter.

"Scott!" Kala, disapproving of this outcome, stomped her foot in frustration. "How could you agree to let

Calista come back? What about Vivienne? She was the second Miss Brooks, but if Calista returns,

she'll be demoted to the third. Have you thought about how she would feel?"

Technically, Kala was Miss Brooks, and Vivienne was the second Miss Brooks.

But since Kala was rarely home and seldom participated in the Brooks family's business affairs, few

people knew about her status.

So when Vivienne returned, everyone naturally started referring to her as Miss Brooks.

However, Vivienne, who was second in the family hierarchy, now suddenly became third. It was infuriating!

Ashley was also upset, "Yeah, why should an illegitimate daughter become the second Miss Brooks?"

She used to have a good impression of Calista, who was a medical prodigy with a cool and aloof demeanor. But she immediately disliked Calista as she heard Mila's shocking news.

Just like she couldn't stand Paula, she couldn't stand Calista either.

Paula had turned the Brooks family upside down, and now here was Calista, a daughter born out of wedlock through unfair means. The thought alone made Ashley nauseous.

She had always felt that love was the thing she yearned the most whereas the actions of Mila and her daughter had tainted it.

"Enough!" Scott suddenly shouted, "This matter is settled and no one else is allowed to comment!"

Kala wanted to argue for Vivienne, but the stern look from Scott made her tremble in fear so she didn't dare to say anything.

Vivienne, on the other hand, was as steady as a rock; she was sitting in her chair with a faint smile on her face.

Kala couldn't understand how Vivienne could remain so calm when this illegitimate daughter had rioted.

Scott noticed Vivienne's composure too. He walked over to her and tried to soften his voice, "Vivienne,

I apologize to you and your mother... but Tristan, he owes his life to your mother. He wishes to marry

Calista, and she shares his feelings. I want to fulfill his wish."

Scott paused and said, "But don't worry, my fortunes will still all be yours. Calista won't get a penny!"

Upon hearing this, Mila and Calista's faces darkened.

Just as they expected, Scott would never truly care for them.

But that didn't matter. That was a long game. They would wait and see whether Vivienne would inherit

the Brooks family fortune and whether she would successfully marry Percival.

Vivienne stood up, looked at Scott, and spoke calmly, "Mr. Brooks, this is your family matter. As long as

you're pleased, there's no need to inform me."

"Vivienne..." Scott was displeased with Vivienne's attitude.

She had been back for quite some time, but she never changed her cold demeanor towards him.

Even a heart of iron should have been melted by now, right?

But in her eyes, he was less than Dorian and Cordelia. He had seen her laughing and talking easily with them several times.

Why was it different with him?

"Mr. Brooks, have you finished dealing with your family matters?" Vivienne ignored Scott's hesitation.

Scott was silent for a moment before sighing, "Yes, I have."

"Good, now it's my turn to deal with my brother's issue." Vivienne said as she strode towards Calista.

Calista was immediately panicked. She was lying on the ground and feeling pain all over her body. She could only use her hands to push herself backwards and said in a frightened voice, "What are you doing? I am your sister!"

Vivienne stood over her and looked down at her, "They might acknowledge you, but I don't!"

"You... you're outrageous!" Calista looked up at Vivienne, who stood there like a statue. Her presence made it hard for her to breathe.

Seeing this, Mila quickly stepped in front of Calista and looked straight into Vivienne's eyes, "Vivienne, don't go too far! Calista was wrong to hit your brother and she'll apologize to you. But now you're all family. I hope you can let bygones be bygones!"

“Apologize? I don't accept it!”

Vivienne swiftly picked up Calista from the ground; with a quick twist of her hands, Calista's arm was broken.

Calista screamed in pain, but before she could make a sound, Vivienne quickly disabled all her limbs!

She then tossed Calista on the ground like a piece of garbage.

Her movements were lightning fast, so quick that no one could clearly see how she struck. She stood grounded with hands in her pockets; her posture radiated an air of supreme authority and indifference.

Vivienne swept her gaze over the Brooks family and slowly talked, "From now on, anyone who dares to lay a finger on my little brother will be chopped to bits and fed to the dogs."

Her pretty face and soft voice belied the immense pressure her words exerted.

The Brooks was left speechless.

Vivienne turned to Scott nonchalantly, "Mr. Brooks, I've incapacitated your daughter. If you have any grievances, come find me."

With that said, she turned and ascended the staircase.

It took a good five minutes after she had left before anyone from the Brooks dared to speak up.

Scott was the first to recover. He glanced at Calista with a look of disdain, but nevertheless ordered his

staff, "Get her to the hospital. Spare no effort in treating her."

After all, she was his daughter. He couldn't just ignore her.

...

At midnight.

Vivienne had just finished with her work when there was a knock at her door.

She rose to open it and found Tristan standing outside.

He greeted her, "Vivienne."

"Hmm." She acknowledged and stepped aside to let him in.

Tristan stepped into the room, walking as smoothly as any normal person would.

Vivienne gestured towards the couch, "Have a seat."

Tristan nodded and sat down.

After a moment of silence, he reported, "Calista has been sent to the hospital."

"Alright, I got it." Vivienne poured two glasses of water and handed one to Tristan.

Tristan took a sip, then looked at Vivienne as he tightened his lips. After a moment of hesitation, he finally asked, "I don't understand. If you intended to incapacitate Calista, why let her return to the Brooks family?"

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Tristan gazed at Vivienne, whose face was eerily mirroring the familiar features of Karen. He felt a wave of guilt as he recalled his numerous past accusations against her.

Never in his wildest dreams did he imagine that, ten days ago, Vivienne would suddenly appear and heal his leg. She also had him continue his recovery in the hospital and told him that she would get in touch with him after some time.

His visit to the Brooks family today was instigated by a message from Vivienne.

The truth about Calista's lineage was revealed by Vivienne during his healing, along with some other shocking revelations.

He admitted that his feelings for Calista were real, but gratitude outweighed everything else to him.

He had long lost his affection for Calista especially when he thought of things that she had done to Vivienne.

Vivienne asked him to marry Calista, to which he reluctantly agreed.

Vivienne took a sip of water, her gaze profound. "I'm waiting for an answer!"

Tristan glanced at Vivienne, not sure what answer she was seeking. But upon meeting her clear eyes,

he suddenly felt that, just like Karen, she had her own reasons for everything she did.

Tristan remained silent for a moment and didn't dig further. Instead, he asked, "What am I supposed to

do next? Scott is already arranging for a doctor for Calista. Am I truly supposed to marry her?"

"Let him arrange it," Vivienne responded, a faint smile tugging at her lips.

Tristan paused. He was utterly unable to comprehend Vivienne's intentions.

She incapacitated Calista, yet she was allowing Scott to heal her.

Vivienne set her water glass down on the table, her tone indifferent, "Calista won't want to marry you.

You just need to accompany her and don't worry about anything else."

Tristan contemplated for a while, then simply responded, "Alright!"

He didn't ask further, knowing that Vivienne wouldn't spill anything even if he did.

He decided to just follow her instructions.

After their brief conversation, Tristan departed.

Vivienne closed the door, pulled out her cellphone and dialed Matthew. She instructed him to withdraw

all personnel from the entrances to Rivenwood.

At the Ellington family.

Just as Percival was about to call Vivienne, Thomas climbed in through the window.

He walked up to Percival and greeted with respect, "Percival! Paula has been delivered."

"Good," Percival responded, his face expressionless. "Keep an eye on her and Arabella. I don't want them causing trouble for Vivienne again."

"Understood."

Thomas responded but didn't leave.

Percival looked up at him. "Is there anything else?" he asked.

Thomas hesitated for a moment, then asked, "I can't figure this out. Is Arabella really Paula's daughter?"

Percival and he had both seen the DNA test between Arabella and Scott.

There was no blood relation between the two.

If Arabella was Paula's biological daughter, then she should share some genetic relationship with Scott.

But why were the test results as such?

After delivering Paula to where Arabella was, he pondered over this question for the entire journey but couldn't crack it.

"She isn't," Percival responded; his voice was emotionless.

Thomas was taken aback, "She isn't? Why is Paula then targeting Vivienne?"

He seriously doubted that Paula had a brain issue.

Arabella wasn't even her biological daughter, yet she constantly schemed against Vivienne and even had Thaddeus kidnapped.

Anyone close to Vivienne knew that if you messed with her, she might still show some mercy. But if you harmed the ones she cared about, you would never live a peaceful life.

Of course, death wouldn't be an easy way out either!

When Vivienne got ruthless, she could even surpass Percival in this realm.

"Perhaps she's... insane?" Percival quipped, a wicked smile playing on his lips.

Thomas paused. Then curiosity got the better of him, "Then who is Paula's daughter?"

"I don't know," Percival retorted, shooting him a glance. "And why should it concern me?"

Was he obliged to help an insane woman, who's constantly scheming against Vivienne, find her daughter?

Thomas scratched his head and gave an awkward laugh, "Just curious."

Paula had been desperately searching for her daughter to the point of insanity, and ended up mistaking Arabella as her child. In the end, she was sent there to suffer alongside Arabella.

And she would never know who her real daughter was.

"Perhaps she has already died," Percival uttered nonchalantly.

...

The following day.

William and Scott posted Twitter updates simultaneously.

William merely stated that from then on, the Pendleton family had no connection with Calista.

He didn't slander nor disclose specific details, given that he had raised Calista for over two decades, and a certain father-daughter bond still existed.

He didn't make things ugly.

Scott simply announced that Calista was his daughter, and later on she would be included in the

Brooks family genealogy.

He didn't even mention the name change, nor did he add any extra words about Calista.

Meanwhile, Calista was admitted to the Brooks family's private hospital. Scott concealed the news,

keeping people in the dark about her current condition with paralyzed limbs.

These Twitter updates sparked a tirade of online insults.

In this era of advanced information technology, someone dug up the past affair between Mila and Scott

and spread it all over the internet.

Netizens were hurling all kinds of nasty comments.

"Scott is such a scumbag, pretending to be a romantic all this while when he already had a secret

daughter. Is this the kind of character top-tier families have? I'm utterly disgusted."

"No wonder Karen bolted from her wedding years ago. I would've done the same. Who would willingly

marry into a mess of secret affairs?"

"I suspect Scott and Mila were having a clandestine affair, which is why they lured Karen into marrying

Scott. It was all to cover up their dirty secret."

"I agree with the comment above. Just a while ago, the Brooks family acknowledged a daughter, rumored to be Karen's. But she's just 19, while Calista is already 22, three years older than Vivienne.

Doesn't that mean Scott was two-timing Karen with Mila?"

"Agreed. I heard that the Brooks and the Clark families had plans for a marriage. Mila has always had a thing for Scott. They probably schemed Karen into this to hide their scandalous affair. I reckon Karen might even be dead, possibly at their hands."

"Agreed."

"Can't agree more."

The public was unaware of Karen's death and they associated the fact that Vivienne didn't meet Karen when she was acknowledged by the Brooks family. They started speculating that if Karen did flee her wedding and give birth to Vivienne, then naturally, Vivienne would've been living with Karen.

It didn't make sense for Vivienne to return to the Brooks family without Karen.

The most plausible reason for Karen's absence was that she might have been dead.

Murdered by Scott and Mila, no less.

Consequently, virtuous netizens started to call the police and demanded the truth about Karen's fate. If

she was dead, they wanted to know if Mila was responsible.

Suddenly, the whole internet was tagging the Rivenwood Police Department.

Chapter 346

In just two hours, all the online chatter about Calista being the heiress of the Brooks family had almost

vanished.

All that remained were headlines like 'Searching for Karen' that saturated the web.

Then, two hours later, an explosive Twitter post was released.

The posting person was Stephen.

"I am Stephen, a friend of Vivienne. I know that her mother passed away ten years ago. She once told

me that she and her mother were pursued by someone, which led to her mother's death. This incident

has always been a sorrow for Vivienne. I never mentioned her mother in front of her again. However,

today, seeing the post from the head of the Brooks family aroused my suspicions. I, Stephen, hereby

officially accuse Scott and Mila of attempted murder and hope the police can investigate the truth to

give Vivienne justice!"

Stephen was a pop icon with nearly a billion fans. As soon as he posted this, it dropped a bomb on the whole internet world.

His fans all shared his post.

Even the hottest stars in the industry retweeted his post one after another.

In no time, with the influence of the celebrities and their fans, the entire server was overwhelmed.

This, in turn, caught the attention of the Rivenwood police department.

...

At breakfast time in the Brooks family.

Almost all the Brooks family members were present, except for Darren, who couldn't make it due to work commitments.

But every face was so grim.

Scott publicly acknowledged Calista's identity, which caused netizens to speculate that Karen might be dead and that she was killed by Scott and Mila. The Brooks family was attacked after that.

People were throwing eggs and tomatoes at the gates of the Brooks Mansion early that morning It

wasn't until the Brooks family security intervened that the situation was calmed down.

At this point, no one had seen Stephen's post yet.

Vivienne had just come down and barely settled in when Kala suddenly exclaimed, "Oh no! Stephen posted something!"

Vivienne paused and felt speechless.

Why is he joining the fray? She thought.

Timothy frowned, "Stephen has nothing to do with the Brooks family. Why make a fuss over his post?"

Kala threw her phone on the table for Timothy to see, "Stephen and Vivienne are friends and he's standing up for her! Scott, look at the mess you've made!"

Stephen was a superstar. If he posted something, it could drop a bomb on the entire internet!

She never imagined Scott would do something so foolish!

What was so great about Calista? The Brooks family was put in this situation just because of her!

Now not only was the Brooks family being attacked, but her own Twitter was also filled with negative comments.

In just over two hours, she had lost a million followers!

The fans were all cursing that there was no one good in the Brooks family except for Vivienne!

She didn't care about losing followers or being criticized. After all, what Scott did was indeed unfair to

Vivienne!

But what she did care about was that the Brooks family was being attacked online because of one

Calista!

She was a total disaster!

"What?" Timothy picked up the phone and looked at the trending Twitter, realizing that the entire

internet was filled with tweets tagging the Rivenwood police for the truth. He slumped into his chair.

Judith also took a look at the phone; she nearly fainted after that.

She threw the phone at Scott and thumped the table, shouting in anger, "What a disaster!"

Scott glanced at Stephen's Twitter post; his face was expressionless as he sat steady as a rock.

He then looked up at Vivienne, who slowly walked to a chair and sat down under his gaze. She

maintained a cold indifference.

After Vivienne sat down, she looked back at him and didn't avoid his gaze at all.

After a long stare-off, Scott finally spoke up, "Vivienne, do you believe what's being said on Twitter?"

"Whether it's true or false is not for me to decide!" Vivienne turned her gaze away, picked up her fork and continued eating; her tone was nonchalant.

She was the only one at the table who could still eat.

Scott kept his gaze fixed on her, "So you had Stephen post this to attract the attention of the police?"

Vivienne paused for a moment, then turned to look at Scott; her expression was cold, "On what grounds do you presume it was me who asked Stephen to do this?"

"Wasn't it you?" Scott looked at her as if trying to see through her.

Vivienne let out a cold laugh, "Does it even matter if I was the culprit?"

She put down her fork, stood up, walked over to Scott, and looked down at him, "My mother didn't run off to Havenwood to escape a marriage, she ran there to escape death; Mr. Brooks, would you care to explain why she had to run for her life?"

Scott's eyes narrowed slightly with an unreadable glitter in his gaze.

A wicked smile tugged at Vivienne's lips, "No rush! I have all the time in the world. In the game of cat and mouse, the mouse can never escape the cat's claw. Don't you agree, Mr. Brooks?"

Scott stared at her silently.

Just then, there was a knock at the door.

Shortly after, several uniformed officers walked in.

After showing their badges, they said in an official tone, "We are from the criminal investigation team.

Mr. Brooks, you are a suspect in a murder case. Please come with us for an investigation!"

Scott looked at them and slowly stood up, "I understand."

He didn't say anything else and followed the officers out.

Once Scott was taken away, the Brooks family was instantly thrown into chaos.

Judith promptly rose from her seat and approached Vivienne, taking her hands in hers. "Vivienne, I

know you've been dealt a hard hand, but you have to believe me, your mother's death had nothing to

do with your father. I implore you, please explain the situation to the police."

Melissa chimed in, "Yes, your father may not have been married to your mother, but we all know he

only had eyes for her. He would never harm her."

Cheryl added, "Are you upset because your father acknowledged Calista? That wasn't entirely his fault,

after all, it was Mila and Paula who orchestrated the whole thing. Calista has been confirmed as your father's child, so he couldn't just ignore that. Vivienne, for the sake of your father who's been good to you, speak to the police, and to Stephen, ask him to take down the Twitter post."

The Brooks family members began to plead collectively.

Only Kala, Ronald, and Carl remained silent.

Regardless of whether it was Vivienne who had done this, they had no right to beg her.

She had lost her mother too!

At the tender age of nine, she had witnessed her mother's death. This grudge wouldn't simply vanish with someone claiming that Scott wasn't the murderer.

Solid proof was needed!

Kala looked up at Vivienne and something dawned on her. Vivienne had returned to the Brooks family for her revenge!

Yet, she couldn't help but feel a bit of sympathy for her.

If she were in the same situation, she might have made the same choice as Vivienne.

Vivienne gently extracted her hands from Judith's grip and spoke with a neutral expression, "The law

will do justice for Mr. Brooks!"

Her plan didn't include handing Scott over to the police, but that didn't mean she objected to Stephen's action.

And of course, it certainly didn't mean that Scott wouldn't walk free unharmed.

Chapter 347

Just as Vivienne had anticipated, Scott stepped out of the police station really quick.

In no time, the police issued a statement clearing Scott of any criminal involvement in Karen's deaths.

Mila, too, was under scrutiny, yet no suspicious behavior was found.

Despite the police's announcement, the netizen group wasn't that easily swayed.

Everyone posted that while Scott and Mila might not be murderers, their affair was undeniable. Scott's betrayal of Karen was just as damning. The scandal continued to sizzle online.

Scott and Mila's reputations plummeted.

Meanwhile, Richard only found out about Calista being Scott's daughter the next day over lunch.

Being a man of certain age, he rarely surfed the internet. Besides, he had spent the previous day

outdoors with an old friend. The folks of the Ellington family, who wouldn't want to bother Richard with

such matters, had chosen to keep it a secret.

By the time Richard returned home, the news had exploded online. There was no way he could ignore it now.

Furious, Richard stormed off to the nursing home to give Baron a piece of his mind.

Baron was so startled by Richard's outburst that he nearly passed off.

Fuming, Baron shot back at Scott at the Brooks Mansion, announcing that he would not attend

Calista's reunion banquet. After venting his anger, he returned to the nursing home.

Upon his return, his fury had not subsided. To make matters worse, he found his room had been stripped bare!

Not even a bed was left in the room.

Baron roared in anger, "Richard! You old fool, may lightning strike you down!"

...

Two days later.

The online slander against Scott and Mila had quietened down.

Meanwhile, Scott had been making frequent trips to the hospital to visit Calista.

Excluding Kala, Ronald, and Carl, the Brooks family's enthusiasm for Vivienne had dwindled all of a sudden. They would greet her out of courtesy but the conversations remained short and superficial. Vivienne, however, was totally unfazed by their attitude.

She had found a tutor for Thaddeus, who was Charlotte Redwood!

Originally, she had planned to ask Mr. James to help find a tutor for Thaddeus. But with Mr. James preoccupied with solving the mystery of Atticus' lineage and personally fetching Ondine from the mountain region, Vivienne had to make other arrangements.

Ondine, William's childhood sweetheart and Mr. James's adopted daughter, had chosen to teach in the mountain region after graduation. She had been there for twenty years.

The place she taught was thousands of miles away from Rivenwood. Concerned for her safety, Mr. James had fetched her personally.

On top of that, Atticus had been overseas for an academic competition. It was only recently that he started making his way back.

With Ondine and Atticus, mother and son, preparing to reunite with William, Mr. James was also busy

preparing. Vivienne decided to find a friendly, patient tutor to help Thaddeus, who had been traumatized for several times by his experiences in Havenwood and Rivenwood. His physic trauma was so intense that he had backed away with contact.

Charlotte volunteered to become the tutor when she heard about this.

Without hesitation, Vivienne agreed.

As this year's college entrance test champion, Charlotte was not only academically gifted but also possessed a good character. Vivienne felt at ease with Charlotte teaching Thaddeus.

Just as Vivienne had settled Thaddeus, Percival called.

"Vivienne, I've arrived." Percival's voice was gentle and filled with an irresistible charm.

Humming in acknowledgment, Vivienne rose from her seat and headed for the door.

Percival's car was parked in front of the Brooks Mansion. It was the same inconspicuous sedan.

As she was about to fasten her seat belt, Percival beat her to it.

As he leaned over, a faint scent of tobacco emanated from him, not unpleasant at all.

Vivienne glanced at him, "Has Fiona left?"

Fiona had invited her to an art exhibition previously. While Vivienne had no particular interest in art, she

accepted the invitation out of respect for Richard.

The exhibition was originally scheduled for a few days back but was postponed to today due to unforeseen circumstances.

"Yes." Percival started the car, his voice neutral. "She left with Jeffrey."

Vivienne paused, "Jeffrey is going too?"

"The exhibition is organized by Jeffrey." Percival replied, unperturbed.

"He's quite the artist!" Vivienne quipped, smiling.

Percival chuckled, "Henry's people have been causing some trouble recently."

Vivienne raised an eyebrow at that, "So, Mr. Wolf, do you want me to help you fight off these troublemakers?"

Percival cleared his throat, "Ahem! Vivienne, someone from the Ellington family is still hiding in the shadows. I haven't found out who it is yet."

Vivienne's lips curled up in understanding, "Got it."

They did not say much after that.

Soon, they arrived at the art museum.

Fiona and Jeffrey were already waiting at the entrance.

Seeing them approach, Fiona greeted them with a warm smile, "Percival, Vivienne, here you are."

Jeffrey merely glanced at Percival and Vivienne with an eyeful of impatience. He didn't even want to greet them.

"Yes. Let's go in." Percival responded. He was apathetic and almost expressionless while leading Vivienne into the exhibition hall.

Looking at their retreating figures, Fiona's eyes narrowed momentarily before she quickly regained her composure and followed them inside. Jeffrey, of course, followed suit.

...

Inside the exhibition hall.

The hall was exquisitely decorated. The paintings hung on the walls were clearly high in value.

Fiona spotted a few familiar faces and went to greet them.

As the owner of the gallery, Jeffrey had to attend to some matters and stepped away momentarily.

That left Percival and Vivienne alone.

As they strolled deeper into the gallery, Vivienne glanced at the various artworks, then turned to

Percival, asking, "Did he create all of these?"

Had she been out of touch for so long? She recognized several paintings on the wall from somewhere.

But the artists' names didn't seem to read Jeffrey!

"Some are by artists he's signed, a few are his own creations," Percival replied as he motioned towards

a display case nearby, "let's just say those ones."

Following his direction, Vivienne looked over and took in the eclectic collection. She was speechless as

her brows juddered a little, "Definitely his style!"

Percival's lips curled up slightly, "Indeed."

Vivienne continued on, not particularly interested in these less-than-masterful pieces.

Whispers suddenly filled the gallery, "This painting is a real gem, probably the best one here."

"Why hasn't the artist's name been mentioned? I'd like to request another piece from them."

"Can you really request a specific artist? I want to do the same!"

Vivienne looked in the direction of the voices.

A crowd was gathered around a particular artwork, lavishing it with praise.

Intrigued, Vivienne wondered what sort of painting had captured their attention.

While many pieces in the gallery could dupe the untrained eye, those same folks wouldn't be arguing over who'd get to commission the artist.

With that thought, she stepped towards the commotion.

Percival followed Vivienne's pace.

When Vivienne reached the painting, she halted; her gaze intensified as a hint of hostility emanated from her.

Percival noticed her reaction and raised his eyes. His pupils shrunk.

Indeed, the painting was remarkable.

It depicted a figure's silhouette from the back. Despite its simplicity, it conveyed a sense of profound solitude.

Both color scheme and composition were superior to most works in the gallery.

However, the person in the painting was Karen!

Chapter 348

Suddenly, a voice rose above the chatter in the crowded gallery.

"Who's the artist behind this masterpiece? Is there staff around?"

In no time, a gallery associate made his way over, "Good day, sir. Can I assist you in any way?"

"I want to commission the artist of this painting to create a portrait for my mother's 70th birthday celebration."

The associate gave him an apologetic look, "I'm afraid that won't be possible, sir. The art is done by our gallery owner. He doesn't take on private commissions."

As the associate's words hung in the air, a visible shift in Vivienne's demeanor was apparent.

Jeffrey Ellington really had the audacity!

"Can you call your boss over here? I'd like to discuss this with him," the man insisted.

No sooner had the man finished speaking, Jeffrey himself appeared, "Who's looking for me?"

The man was clearly familiar with Jeffrey, "Isn't this Mr. Ellington? You own this gallery too?"

The Ellington family was a well-known entity in the circle.

The arrogant Paul, the motorcycle-obsessed Earl, Jeffrey, Fiona, and even the youngest Ellingtons,

Kenneth and Isolde, were known to everyone.

Perhaps the only Ellington they knew little about was Percival, who was thought to be disabled.

"Of course," Jeffrey replied with a dismissive tone, "Just how many galleries in Rivenwood do you think aren't mine?"

The man didn't dare offend Jeffrey, and his posture slumped a bit involuntarily, "Right, right. I was wondering why this painting was so exceptional. It turned out that the painting was yours."

"As long as you appreciate it, that's all that matters. As for your mother's portrait, I'll have one of our staff artists take care of it. Consider it a token of my appreciation for your taste."

The man, publicly humiliated by Jeffrey, couldn't save his dignity. But all he could do was chuckle awkwardly and express his gratitude.

Jeffrey huffed, sweeping his gaze over the crowd until he spotted Percival and Vivienne at the back.

"Since we're all here at my exhibition, I'd like to introduce two special guests," a smirk tugged at his lips before he pointed towards Percival, "This is my cousin, Percival. I'm sure you all know him."

The crowd turned to look at Percival and gasped in surprise.

"Isn't Percival supposed to be wheelchair-bound? How is he standing? Am I hallucinating?"

The news of Percival's recovery was only known to a few close families in Rivenwood. To the public,

Percival was still believed to be disabled.

"No, you're not hallucinating. I saw him walk in too. He's standing right there."

"Good heavens! The Ellingtons must have some top-notch doctors in their network. They managed to cure a disabled man!"

"Having such a powerful doctor in their corner definitely solidifies the Ellingtons' status in Rivenwood."

While the crowd was still buzzing, Jeffrey gestured towards Vivienne, "And this is Vivienne, my cousin Percival's fiancée."

After the Brooks family hosted their family reunion party, the Ellington family was going to host another party to publicize Vivienne and Percival's engagement, but the party was pushed back when Richard was attacked after mistakenly riding in Percival's car.

And they hadn't nail down the exact time. Vivienne didn't let them do it. She was too busy to attend any parties.

News of Vivienne and Percival's engagement was still a well-guarded secret among their close circle.

Thus, many at the exhibition were hearing it for the first time.

Although Eddy's two live streaming before let a large netizen group know their relationships, but those were from the younger generation. The people who came to the exhibition today were company board members; those people were older and rarely read gossip news. In that case, they never knew their relationship.

As the crowd turned their attention to Vivienne, expressions of shock spread across some of the faces.

"Isn't that Vivienne Brooks, the lady of the Brooks family?"

The Brooks family's reunion banquet for Vivienne had drawn the attention of everyone in their circle.

Scott admitted Karen as the only love of his life. That was why people admired their fairy-tale love story. And when they admitted Calista, the Brooks family shot into the spotlight.

So each member's life in the Brooks family was flipped through by the netizen group. Their stories were so hyped up that everyone in the circle had to pay them attention.

"Ah, that makes sense. I saw Percival and Vivienne together at the engagement party. So, the Ellingtons and the Brooks are uniting through marriage."

"With the top two families joining forces, it's a power couple in the making!"

"And Vivienne is quite a beauty. She's dressed so simply, yet she stands out like a painting come to

life."

Hearing the crowd's praises, Jeffrey's face hardened. He wasn't here to listen to them fawn over

Percival and Vivienne.

With Paul in the police station, there was no one to steal his thunder. It was his time to shine.

Jeffrey chuckled, "Percival, Vivienne, since you two are engaged, I haven't prepared a gift for you.

Allow me to offer this painting as a token of my congratulations."

He gestured at the painting. "I'd like to invite Vivienne to share her thoughts on it."

All eyes turned to Vivienne. As the daughter of the Brooks family, commenting on a piece of art should

be a simple task.

Vivienne glanced up at him, her imposing aura pulling back, her hands shoved into her pockets, her

attitude a bit roguish, "This is plagiarized. How could you possibly have the nerve to ask me to critique

it?"

Everyone gasped in shock!

Plagiarism?

How could that be?

Until today, they had never seen any other artist exhibit this painting.

Jeffrey's eyes flashed with surprise, but he quickly regained his composure, "I was simply giving you a gift. If you disdain it, you could have just declined. Why do you have to throw such a heavy accusation at me? Do you realize how much of an insult plagiarism is to an artist?"

Vivienne flashed him a wicked smile, "So, you are very sure that you didn't plagiarize?"

"Absolutely!" Jeffrey responded confidently.

As soon as he finished speaking, someone spoke up in his defense, "Vivienne, we shouldn't make accusations without evidence."

"Right, you're suggesting that Mr. Ellington plagiarized but do you have any proof?"

Vivienne shot the two people a glance; they were the ones who had just asked Jeffrey to paint.

She retracted her gaze and stowed her smile away. She said in a cold tone, "When did you paint this?"

"A few years ago!" Jeffrey replied without any hesitation.

Vivienne smirked, "You said you painted this years ago. But why did you use this year's newly manufactured paint?"

Jeffrey was taken aback. It strike him that she could literally discern the paint.

The paint he used for this painting was indeed newly developed this year.

This brand of paint had brighter colors and a longer oxidation time, and was currently popular among artists.

"Yes, this painting was indeed made with new paint. The colors are more accurate, and it's easier to mix the shades I want."

"Exactly, it's the latest development. I just bought it yesterday."

Chapter 349

Jeffrey could feel the whispers of the crowd beginning to swirl around him. His face visibly paled.

He turned to Vivienne with a hint of desperation in his voice, "You're accusing me of plagiarism just based on a paint? That's a pretty wild assumption, don't you think?"

His words were hollow and fraught with guilt.

Because he had plagiarized another painting indeed.

He first saw it during his trip to the Mirelia Continent, displayed in a renowned local art gallery. He had wanted to purchase it but was informed it wasn't for sale and would only be on display for three days.

So, he took a photo of it and, upon his return, recreated it for his own gallery exhibition.

He never imagined Vivienne would discover his deceit.

Wasn't she raised within the mountain and seldom venturing out? And she had only recently returned

to the Brooks family. How could she possibly know?

Vivienne raised her eyes; her expression was impassive, "The painting is called Recollections. It was

the artist's tribute to her mother. The bracelet worn by the woman in the painting, even her attire, were

all personally chosen by the artist for her mother. And this painting was only ever displayed overseas.

It's not for sale!"

Her eyes narrowed and a sharp arrow of accusation shot out, "When you decided to copy it, did you

ever consider whether or not you could handle the consequences if the original artist found out?"

Her aura changed suddenly and exuded a palpable sense of danger.

The painting was her tribute to her mother.

It was the memory of her mother's silhouette that had left the deepest impression on her.

Her mother had taken her shopping for the first time since they had gone into hiding. She had bought

Vivienne numerous items but had bought nothing for herself.

Vivienne had admired the bracelet and thought it suited her mother's elegant bearing. She had lied,

saying that she loved seeing her mother wear it. Only then had her mother agreed to buy it.

The outfit her mother was wearing was also bought at Vivienne's insistence.

That day, watching her mother's retreating figure as she went to pay the bill, Vivienne felt it was the

happiest day of her life.

But that evening, her mother committed suicide by poisoning herself.

She was wearing the outfit and the bracelet that Vivienne had chosen for her.

During her years at the Emerald Mountain monastery, Vivienne would often recall that moment and

sketch it. The painting was carefully preserved by her.

When she had to leave Emerald Mountain, she left the painting behind.

Dawson, the man who was cleaning the monastery that day, had seen the painting. Captivated by its

beauty, he sent it out under her name. Soon, people started looking for her, wanting to display the

painting in their galleries.

She had declined several times but finally agreed when an offer she couldn't refuse was presented.

However, she had made it clear that the painting was not for sale.

As a result, it was only displayed for three days before it was taken down.

Jeffrey was taken aback by her intensity. He took a step back and tried to defend himself, "You've got

all your facts straight, but who is the original artist then? Apart from this painting, are there any other

works? An artist capable of such an exquisite piece surely has more than one work, right?"

Vivienne looked at him, her eyes cold, "Her name is Eulalia."

"Eulalia?" someone in the crowd exclaimed.

"Eulalia is a mysterious artist. Many countries have invited her to paint, but she has always declined."

"It's not just that. Eulalia's paintings have a soul. Her works start at a million at auction, and there are

people who are willing to pay high prices to collect her art."

Jeffrey was taken aback. He hadn't expected Vivienne to know so much.

Even the artist's name.

Suppressing his panic, he spoke up again, "So you say it's Eulalia, and we should just take your word

for it? Everyone knows her paintings are auctioned off by the National Art Gallery. If it's really her work,

how did this painting end up here?"

He stubbornly refused to admit his crime.

After all, Eulalia's paintings were all in the National Art Gallery or in private collections.

They would never just appear in the open!

Vivienne was just a recent addition to the Brooks family, a mere debutante. She couldn't ever bring

Eulalia to the scene.

Vivienne's icy gaze fell on him as a slow smile spread across her face. "During my time in the

mountain, I dabbled in painting and took the name Eulalia. What a coincidence, don't you think?" she

asked.

Everyone in the room was stunned on hearing that.

Eulalia was Vivienne?

How could that be possible?

She wasn't even twenty yet. How could she create such breathtaking art?

"Huh! What a coincidence indeed!" Jeffrey scoffed. "But I would advise you to choose a different name.

I understand your desire for fame, but Eulalia's name isn't one to be trifled with."

"Is that so?" Vivienne replied, her voice indifferent. She picked up her phone and dialed a number.

The call was quickly answered, and a respectful voice on the other end greeted her, "Miss Eulalia, what a pleasant surprise. Do you have a new piece for us?"

Vivienne switched the call to speakerphone. The moment the voice was heard, a hush fell over the crowd.

Even Jeffrey was stunned.

That voice belonged to the secretary to the director of the National Art Gallery.

Every artist dreamed of having their work displayed in the National Art Gallery; having a painting there would instantly skyrocket their fame.

Vivienne actually knew the director's secretary, and he had just referred to her as Miss Eulalia?

How was that possible?

Before he could recover, Vivienne spoke again with an icy voice, "The Ellington family's second grandson, Jeffrey, plagiarized my painting, Recollections. What should be done about this?"

The person on the other end of the line paused, then replied seriously, "We will investigate this matter thoroughly! And we will immediately sue the other party on your behalf and close up the gallery!"

"Very well. You handle it," Vivienne said and hung up.

Jeffrey was stunned.

A lawsuit?

Closing up the gallery?

This couldn't be happening.

His gallery had just opened recently, and this exhibition was supposed to boost his reputation. If the gallery was closed, what would he do?

He would never be able to make a living as an artist again!

As he was about to speak, a staff member rushed in. "Boss, we're in trouble. The National Art Gallery has sent us a legal notice and ordered us to remove all the paintings from the gallery immediately."

No sooner than the man finished speaking, another staff member sprinted over, "Bad news! Some guys claiming to be from the National Art Gallery just showed up. They're saying they're going to shut us down!"

Jeffrey was completely flabbergasted by this turn of events!

"How could this happen?" he couldn't believe it. His meticulously planned art exhibition was shut down in the blink of an eye.

Jeffrey jerked his head to look at Vivienne, his teeth gritted in rage, "It's you! You are behind all of these! Nothing good has happened since you got engaged to Percival. You first threw Paul into jail, and now you're ruining my art show!"

With an angry roar, Jeffrey lunged at Vivienne, "You slut, I'll kill you!"

Percival stepped in front of Vivienne, catching Jeffrey's wrist with a single hand; his stern face was devoid of any emotions, "Try touching her. I dare you."

Chapter 350

Percival's grip was so strong that Jeffrey winced under the pressure.

"Ouch! That hurts!"

Percival stared at him coldly, his voice frigid, "What did you just call her?"

"I...I didn't call her anything. I was calling myself a slut!" Jeffrey quickly responded.

He didn't have many redeeming qualities, but compared to Paul, his greatest advantage was his ability to give and take.

Percival let go of him, his voice deep, "The art galleries under your name will be closed from today. You

have one day. If you can't do it, I'll tear them down myself."

By copying Vivienne's most cherished painting, he should be thankful that Percival didn't ruin him. He should be grateful that they shared the same last name, Ellington.

Jeffrey felt a wave of resentment but dared not show it on his face, not in the face of Percival and Vivienne's murderous glares, "I'm still your cousin anyway. Your actions today aren't just humiliating me, they're also humiliating the Ellington family. Have you thought about that?"

"You're the one who's humiliating yourself. What does that have to do with me and Vivienne?" Percival retorted in a casual tone while he was fixing his disheveled clothes.

He didn't care about the reputation of the Ellington family.

If it weren't for the fact that the Ellingtons were built by his grandfather, he wouldn't still keep himself as part of this family as these people thought.

He never needed the Ellington family's glory to survive!

"But you're still a part of the Ellington family!" Jeffrey shot back defiantly.

He had always been outclassed by Percival as a child. He had thought that once Percival was deemed

useless, no one would stand in his way. But he had miscalculated.

Percival was not useless; he was pretending!

It seemed he had to rethink his plans. He couldn't just let Percival take over the Ellingtons!

"And so?" Percival raised an eyebrow, his gaze devoid of warmth.

Infuriated, Jeffrey couldn't comprehend how Percival could be so indifferent.

If he was humiliated, how would that benefit Percival?

But it was clear that Percival was determined to have him shut down his art galleries. Those galleries,

which he had spent a fortune to establish, were meant to help him take over the Ellingtons one day.

If they were closed, what could he use against Percival?

No way!

He couldn't let the galleries close!

With that thought, Jeffrey suddenly shouted, "Fiona, where the hell are you? If you don't show up now,

Percival will be the death of me!"

Fiona, who had been silently observing the drama, felt a wave of disdain at Jeffrey's cry.

He is so useless!

He was messing with Vivienne in his gallery! He really didn't know what he was capable of.

How could Percival, who was so protective of Vivienne, let him go?

Fiona sighed and stepped forward.

Looking at Jeffrey, then at Percival, she asked with a confused look, "What's going on?"

"Fiona, you've always been close with our cousin, Percival. Can you help me out here? I don't want to close the art galleries!" Jeffrey clutched at his straws and pleaded hastily.

Among the Ellingtons, Fiona was the closest to Percival besides Kenneth.

Everyone else had their own agendas.

Fiona frowned, "What have you done? Why does Percival want you to close the galleries?"

Jeffrey was frustrated. He was not in the mood to explain the situation but he still needed her help. So he explained the whole thing.

Upon hearing the story, Fiona scolded, "Jeffrey, you fool! If you want to be an artist, then focus on creating your own work. Why would you plagiarize? Vivienne said that painting was a tribute to her mother. Of course she would be angry if you copied it!"

Jeffrey was so infuriated that he felt like cursing.

I asked you to help, not to scold me! He thought.

Fiona gave him a harsh look before she turned to Vivienne, "Vivienne, I'm sorry. I didn't know about this. If I had known earlier, I would have tried to stop him. Can you do me a favor and let this go?"

Vivienne looked at her with a semi-smile on her face, "So, you want me to just let the plagiarist off the hook?"

"No, my brother was definitely wrong. He should be punished." Fiona thought for a moment before saying, "How about this? I'll give you a set of jewelry, which is my latest design that hasn't been showcased yet. Can this be my apology on Jeffrey's behalf?"

Vivienne smirked, "Do you think I lack jewelry?"

Fiona paused before suggesting, "How about a compensation? Name your price. As long as it's within our means, we'll try our best to satisfy you."

Vivienne gave her a glance, "Do I look poor to you?"

A cold glint passed through Fiona's eyes. She was truly stubborn.

"Why don't you propose a condition?" Fiona suggested in the same soft voice.

Vivienne turned to Percival, "Mr. Wolf, what do you think?"

Seeing Vivienne ask for Percival's opinion, Fiona quickly interjected, "Percival, can't you just let this go for the sake of our family? Just tell her to let him off the hook."

Percival looked at her impassively, not uttering a word.

Fiona continued, "Percival, can't you just let this slide for my sake? We will make it up to Vivienne."

At that, Percival's thin lips slowly curled up into a grin as he turned his head to look at Vivienne

Hawthorn. "Can you do a favor for my cousin?" he asked.

Vivienne chuckled, "Sure! I'll do this for your dear cousin!"

Fiona was somewhat taken aback. She hadn't expected her influence over Percival to be that strong.

Fiona laughed, "Thank you guys. Vivienne, if you want any compensation, feel free to tell me."

Vivienne propped her chin on one hand and thought for a moment before saying, "Well, I'll take money!"

"Deal!" Fiona agreed readily. "How about a hundred million dollars?" she asked.

Vivienne gave her a look that said, 'You think you're dealing with a beggar?'

Fiona blinked, "Too little? Then how about three hundred million?"

Her family had snatched nearly ten billion dollars over the years, so giving away three hundred million wasn't a problem.

More importantly, if she had gained more trust from Percival, that would make things easier in the future.

Vivienne didn't say a word.

Why was she only worth a hundred million or three hundred million?

Seeing Vivienne's silent, Fiona's brow furrowed almost imperceptibly, "What amount do you think is appropriate?"

"Ten billion dollars!" Vivienne said coolly.

"What!?" Jeffrey suddenly exclaimed, "Ten billion? Why not just rob a bank? You can't even rob ten billion from a bank! You want ten billion for a lousy painting?"

Fiona's face wasn't looking too good either.

Their entire fortune was just ten billion dollars. How could they possibly give it all to Vivienne?

The brat was definitely here to take advantage of their wealth!

Percival cast a dismissive glance at him, took Vivienne's hand and turned to leave, "Vivienne, let's go.

We're off to rip apart some art galleries."

Jeffrey was immediately silenced.

Those damn lovebirds!

"Wait!" Fiona suddenly called out to stop them, declaring, "Alright, ten billion it is!"