

A nursery rhyme?! The crowd roared with laughter.

“Alana, you’re too Kind,” Alondra said. “I’m not sure if she could even manage a nursery rhyme...”

“Emmeline, ignore them!” Julianna bellowed. “It’s no big deal if you can’t play the piano! After all, you gave me three grandchildren!”

Rosaline glared at Julianna spitefully. Julianna had indirectly insulted Abel for not being able to have more children than Adrien.

“Hmm, let me give it a go, since it’s a party after all!” Emmeline tried to diffuse the tension.

“Go on! You could try ‘Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star’, or ‘Mary Had a Little Lamb’,” Alana encouraged her cousin.

Emmeline ‘took a seat at the piano. She pushed her luscious locks away from her face before placing her fingers on the piano keys tentatively.

The first few notes she played were indeed the starting notes to ‘Mary Had A Little Lamb’, but they sounded awkward and disjointed. Alana was secretly pleased to note the jeers and jibes from the crowd. However, all of a sudden, Emmeline’s fingers picked up the pace and burst into a smooth, tuneful melody. She was playing ‘A Comme Amour’, a famous piece by Richard Clayderman. The piece started out soft and playful, but Emmeline was building up toward a more melancholic climax.

The crowd was stunned in silence as they watched Emmeline play the piano. Abel Ryker too was

completely mesmerized by the

woman in front of him. He was used

to watching piano performances by world class pianists overseas, but no one held a candle to Emmeline.

As if a spell had been cast on him, Abel found himself walking up to Emmeline and standing by her side. Emmeline looked up at him and smiled while her hands were still deftly maneuvering the piano keys, not breaking melody. Abel's heart raced as he looked down at her lovely face from this angle. Her doe-eyes and long, fluttery eyelashes were a part of his fantasies at night.

Alana was completely unimpressed and rather upset that things were not going according to her plan. She was just about to stop Emmeline when Abel placed his hand on the keyboard gently, silently asking Emmeline for permission to duet. Emmeline immediately understood his request and allowed him to pick

up the piece from the middle. Together, they finished the piece in perfect harmony.

Alana's rage slowly turned into despair. Not alone did Emmeline beat her at playing the piano, she even got a chance to duet with Abel. The whole of Struyria knew that she was betrothed to Abel Ryker, yet they cheered and supported Emmeline and Abel as they played their duet.

"Emmeline!" Alana lifted her skirt and stomped toward Emmeline, her eyes burning with anger. "How dare you seduce my fiancé?!" She raised a menacing hand, ready to give Emmeline a slap, but Abel caught her hand before she could strike.

He pushed her away from Emmeline forcefully. "Watch your words, we were never engaged to begin with," he growled in a low baritone.

"Abel..." Alana cried out.

“Don’t speak to me so casually!” Abel snapped at her.

“Mr... Mr. Ryker,” Alana addressed him formally, holding back hot tears. All her witnesses to her very public humiliation, but she had one more trick up her sleeve.

Alana covered her face and disappeared into the back of the house. A moment later, the chandelier lights dimmed. A violinist began to play ‘Happy Birthday’ as hundreds of candles lit up the hall. The crowd clapped excitedly as a man dressed up as a clown pushed a trolley with an impressive four-tiered birthday cake toward the center of the hall.

“It’s time for the birthday girl, Ms.

Alana Lane to make a wish!” Alondra announced. “Then we’ll all get to enjoy some delicious Cake afterward!”

Alana had reappeared out of nowhere next to her cake. “Thank you all once again for coming tonight! The party will be livestreamed so the entire Struyria can join my birthday celebration as well!” Alana said as she put on her best smile. A camerawoman

directed her camera toward Alana.

The clown lit the candles on the cake and made an exaggerated blowing gesture, asking Alana to blow out her candles. As Emmeline eyed the clown, she could not help but notice he looked somewhat familiar.

“Hmm, the candles are too high up,” Alana said in a helpless voice. “Why don’t you get down on the floor and let me climb on you so I can reach them?”

The clown was stunned at such a request, unsure of how to respond.

“Don’t you want to get paid tonight?” Alana chuckled. “I’m not paying you if you ruin this party’s mood tonight!” she threatened.

It was hard to tell any emotion from the clown's face because of the heavy makeup. After a brief moment's hesitation, the clown brought his hands and knees to the ground in a crawling position.

"Roll the cameras!" Alana winked at the camerawoman as she stepped on the clown's back and propped herself up.

The crowd clapped and cheered

jubilantly as Alana made her wish and blew out the candles, but Emmeline could not keep her eyes off the clown. Her heart shattered into a thousand pieces as she watched him bend over only to be trampled upon by Alana. Why did the clown remind her of...

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