

Chapter 28 The Competition

Joshua and Lilliana followed after them once they left the store.

He kept his eyes on the tail lights of Gerry's car as they faded into the distance.

Lilliana clung to his arm, sneering in anger.

"Who knew Alicia could pull something like this off? She's even managed to get close to Gerry."

Joshua looked away and said, "Gerry isn't interested in her like that."

Lilliana shot back immediately, "But if she offers herself to him, why would he refuse? There's no commitment, so there's nothing to lose. Maybe she used that to get into the competition."

Joshua felt a painful tightness in his chest.

He knew Alicia wouldn't stoop that low.

He knew Alicia wouldn't do something like that, and hearing Lilliana make such remarks disgusted him even more now.

"Let's just head home," he said.

Lilliana wondered aloud, "Joshua, do you think Gerry's sudden kindness toward Alicia means he's already chosen her?"

Joshua felt a sinking feeling inside.

He shook his head. "No. If Gerry planned on picking her, there wouldn't be any need for this competition. He would've made the decision already."

Lilliana's expression relaxed slightly.

"You're probably right." She let out a relieved sigh. "Alicia's just trying to stay in the picture by sticking close to Gerry."

Their concerns didn't last long once Gerry made his announcement.

He revealed that the theme song competition would be an open selection.

Furthermore, users could cast their votes online.

When Lilliana heard this, a wide smile spread across her face.

"I've got so many fans. Even if only a fraction of them vote, Alicia won't stand a chance. What's Gerry thinking? Is he planning to fail?"

Joshua kept a serious look on his face as he spoke. "If this competition ends up being a live event, you'll have to sing the song yourself. Do you think you can actually handle that?"

Lilliana brushed off the concern without hesitation. "I'll be fine. All I need is a few practice sessions."

They had already gotten the song from Iris, and its quality was flawless in every way.

Lilliana absolutely loved the piece.

But despite that, Joshua couldn't shake the feeling of unease.

Something didn't sit right with him, though he couldn't put his finger on why. There was a nagging suspicion that everything wasn't as certain as it seemed.

The competition, which had felt like a guaranteed victory, suddenly felt less secure.

Even so, Lilliana had Caden's support.

And he hadn't taken any action recently.

So who else could possibly be working against them?

Joshua thought hard, but no answer came. Who had he missed?

The day of the competition arrived, and the atmosphere buzzed with excitement.

Aside from the judges, the event drew members of the Green family and the Yates family.

Several high-profile figures filled the venue, people who were there thanks to hefty payments from both families.

Lilliana's team was in full swing as well.

Following her instructions, they flooded every social media platform with posts about the competition. They even set up a live stream to capture everything happening on-site.

Gerry sat in the main seats at the back and turned to Caden with a grin. "Lilliana's die-hard fans are in for a real shock today."

Caden casually twisted open a bottle of water, taking a sip without a hint of emotion crossing his face.

"Are you that confident Alicia's going to win?"

Gerry puffed out his chest, clearly proud. "Of course. But let me tell you something..."

He stopped himself just before revealing too much and quickly changed his tone. "Forget it. Alicia wouldn't want me to spill anything."

A sinister smile tugged at the corners of Caden's mouth.

"Since when do you start following what women say?"

Gerry leaned back and said, "It's a promise between Alicia and me. I can't break it."

As the competition neared its start, the lively chatter died down, and the venue became silent.

The stage lights flickered on.

When the music began, Lilliana walked out slowly, dressed in an elaborate outfit as she sang her heart out.

She felt completely satisfied with the song, pouring extra effort into every note. It seemed that she was determined to give it her all.

On the big screen above, the online voting surged with activity. Enthusiastic users cast their votes rapidly, and the numbers climbed higher with every second.

Gerry shook his head and sighed. "The song is good, no doubt about that. But her voice lacks depth and falls flat."

Caden remained emotionless.

His eyes were locked on the stage.

He wanted to see how Alicia's performance would compare, wondering if it would impress him as much as Gerry claimed.

For two minutes, the stage lights were completely off.

When they finally came back on, a single spotlight illuminated the stage, revealing a piano.

Alicia stood in front of the piano, wearing a light blue gown. The soft lighting made her profile look almost dreamlike.

The scene was nothing short of breathtaking.

A strange silence enveloped the venue, creating an atmosphere so quiet that the sound of a pin dropping would have been audible.

Alicia gradually lifted her hands, preparing for her performance.

As the notes flowed into the air, she began to hum softly, filling the space with her melody.

Her voice that filled the air was both striking and enchanting. It held a power that mesmerized everyone in the audience.

The audience began to shift in their seats, clearly taken aback.

"Wait, is that her voice...?" someone exclaimed before quickly falling silent.

Whispers began to fill the room.

In the audience, those who anticipated a lackluster performance were

left in shock.

Lilliana, in particular, felt a wave of disbelief wash over her.

Her face turned pale as the reality of the moment sank in.

It wasn't just the quality of Alicia's song. Alicia's voice sounded exactly like Iris'.

This performance amazed everyone even more than what Iris had performed last year.

What on earth was happening?

How could Alicia write such a song and sing with a voice so similar?

At that moment, Lilliana's agent hurried over. Panic was evident on his face. "Bad news, Lilliana! The live stream is now flooded with worrying comments!"

Lilliana's fans noticed that something was not right. They flooded the chat with comments, voicing their concerns.

Some fans questioned Lilliana's integrity, while others praised Alicia.

The votes for Alicia shot up on the big screen, quickly outpacing Lilliana's score.