

A Thousand Faces Hide The Genius Heiress' Wrath

Chapter 11:

Aiden's gaze lingered on Janice's departing figure, his eyes narrowing thoughtfully. Despite her mundane background, there was something about her that seemed profoundly intricate. "Dig into Janice's history. I want every detail uncovered," he instructed crisply.

"Understood."

Something about Janice felt oddly familiar to Aiden, echoing a presence from his past.

She reminded him of the woman who had rescued him from a near-fatal car crash years back.

Although the trauma of the accident had clouded his memory, preventing him from recalling her face, he remembered she was strikingly beautiful.

Like an angel, she had pulled him out of the endless chasm, just as despair threatened to consume him entirely.

“I will find you.” Aiden’s gaze sharpened, his voice laced with resolve. For three long years, his thoughts had been haunted by her image, turning her into his relentless obsession.

The buzz of anticipation filled the air as the fashion design competition was poised to commence.

Around the venue, guests settled into their seats, eagerly awaiting the introduction of the notable attendees.

Having just soothed Delilah, Laurie strode to the judges’ table and seated herself with an air of unmistakable confidence.

She cast a brief, knowing smile towards the vacant chair next to her. Aside from JE, she garnered the most attention in the room. Her presence even eclipsed the other judges, bolstered by a stellar career adorned with numerous international accolades. Yet, the absence of JE lingered in the air like a thick fog. Laurie had been looking forward to proposing a collaborative endeavor to JE during this break.

As these thoughts swirled in her mind, Janice appeared before her.

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Laurie's expression turned stern, her tone icy as she demanded, "What are you doing here?"

Janice positioned herself in front of Laurie and responded with unruffled composure, "I was invited here as a distinguished guest."

"You?" Laurie scoffed with disbelief. "What talents do you possess, Janice, aside from flaunting yourself and charming men?"

Shaking her head slightly, Janice let out a disappointed sigh. "Mrs. Edwards, your family is so well regarded. How can you not be embarrassed by such crude words?"

"Did I say anything wrong?" Laurie retorted, rising to her full height, arms folded defiantly. "Without the Green family's backing, do you really think you'd be invited here? It's astonishing how you've managed to captivate Aiden..."

Janice's patience snapped, and she sharply slapped Laurie across the cheek.

Shock etched itself on Laurie's face as the reality of the slap sank in.

Janice had not only struck her physically but had also dealt a severe blow to the pride of the Edwards family in such a public setting.

“Shut the hell up unless you want to get your ass kicked out! Act like a damn judge, not a noisy pest!” Janice shot back, her retort catching Laurie completely off guard.

Laurie was taken aback. Janice had once been a timid girl, always eager to please, but now she wielded her words like daggers, her demeanor bordering on aggressive.

This confrontation unfolded under the watchful eyes of esteemed guests, yet Janice seemed unfazed by the gravity of the event.

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Chapter 12:

It appeared someone influential, likely Aiden, was bolstering Janice’s newfound boldness.

Despite his physical limitations, he remained the designated successor of the prestigious Green family.

His substantial influence as the prospective head of Eferry's most eminent family meant that if he stood behind Janice, she could indeed navigate this gathering without restraint.

"You're going to regret this, Janice," Laurie murmured, managing to quell her rising fury for the sake of maintaining decorum. She took her seat with a heavy heart.

A chilly chuckle escaped Janice as she settled into the chair next to Laurie.

"Stand up!" Laurie exclaimed, startled. "You shouldn't be sitting here."

With a shrug of dismissal, Janice retorted, "I was invited by the organizers, and there's an open seat. What's the issue with me sitting here? If it bothers you so much, why don't you have the organizers remove me?"

"That's a seat reserved for JE, the internationally acclaimed designer. You have no right to be there."

Casting a provocative glance at Laurie, Janice teased, "And what if I told you I am JE?"

A laugh escaped Laurie, quickly turning into full-blown hysterics. “You, JE? Oh, come on, Janice! If you’re about to lose your mind, do it when it won’t be so embarrassing. Sure, you’ve got some skills in design, but let’s be real—next to JE, you’re out of your league. You might want to get up now. Sure, you have Aiden’s backing, but if you mess with JE, you’re in for a world of trouble.”

At that moment, Delilah also caught sight of Janice’s bold move and rushed over, her voice tinged with urgency. “Janice, what on earth are you thinking? Get up this instant! That seat is reserved for JE. Cross her, and you can kiss your career in design goodbye.”

She was beside herself with worry—not so much about Janice’s rebellion, but the fear of JE’s wrath falling upon her as well.

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However, Janice seemed unfazed by their warnings, remaining in her seat with a mischievous glint in her eyes, evidently enjoying the spectacle unfolding before her.

The onlookers started to whisper among themselves, puzzled by the commotion.

“What’s going on with the Edwards family today? Why are they causing such a scene over this woman?”

“I’ve heard that Janice is Laurie’s biological daughter, though you wouldn’t know it from how they interact—it’s like they’re strangers.”

“Exactly! I just saw Janice lash out at Laurie. Shocking, really. What kind of daughter strikes her own mother?”

“And why on earth would Janice dare to claim JE’s seat? With JE’s reputation, Laurie could find herself ostracized from the design community.”

Aiden remained silent, his eyes fixed on Janice with a mix of intrigue and bewilderment.

Until now, he had only known of Janice as the subdued daughter of the Edwards family, who weathered her family’s cruelty in silence.

Yet, just last evening, she had changed, declaring her intent to cut all ties with the Edwards family. Her newfound audacity was nothing short of astonishing.

Could it be that she was actually JE?

“Mrs. Edwards, what is going on here?”

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Chapter 13:

Suddenly, an event organizer hurried forward in a wave of distress.

The event was on the brink of commencing, yet chaos swirled at its core. Did they not care if it was delayed?

“Mr. Morris, I am terribly sorry! My defiant daughter has taken JE’s seat, and I’m attempting to coax her out of it.”

“What?” Layne Morris turned his gaze to Janice. “Aren’t you JE?”

“What? She’s JE?” Laurie and Delilah exclaimed simultaneously, their expressions etched with shock.

Janice tipped off Layne discreetly.

Seizing the cue, Layne quickly added, “Aren’t you JE’s friend, Miss Edwards?”

This eased Laurie and Delilah’s tension.

“Oh, I thought she was actually JE. Turns out she’s just a friend of hers,” Laurie remarked, a hint of mockery in her voice. “Even so, being her friend doesn’t grant you the right to take this seat.”

With a serene smile, Janice glanced at Layne, her tone steady. “Do you think I have the right to sit here?”

Layne’s sharp instincts kicked in as he sensed the subtle undertone in Janice’s remark. “Absolutely! I was just informed that JE encountered a last-minute issue and couldn’t attend, so she requested you to represent her.”

“How could that be?” Delilah interjected, her voice laced with incredulity. “Mr. Morris, could there be some mistake?” She had been eager to win JE’s favor, viewing it as a critical stepping stone for her ambitions.

Yet, the reality that not only JE was absent, but had sent Janice in her stead, seemed like a harsh setback.

“Delilah, I can already tell what’s on your mind,” Janice remarked, casting a frosty smile her way. “Even if JE were here, you wouldn’t capture her attention. You’re merely someone who lacks any real grasp of design. Just play the naive card and rely on the Edwards family to support you.”

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“Janice, how can you say such things about me?” Delilah’s eyes welled up with tears, and she clung to Laurie, her voice brimming with hurt. “I’ve poured my heart into today’s competition, and Mom has witnessed everything.”

“Indeed!” Laurie quickly added, his words dripping with insincerity. “I don’t know how you managed to connect with JE, but don’t think for a second you can just hitch a ride on her reputation. This competition is equitable, righteous, and transparent. Delilah will stand out on her own merits, and your accusations are completely unfounded.”

“Is that so?” Janice retorted with a smirk, gracefully seating herself and addressing Layne. “Alright then, let’s not waste any more time. I’m quite intrigued to see the marvels you will display.”

With that, the competition began in full swing. The competition's theme was "Nobility," challenging participants to create garments that evoked this grand concept. Each designer took their turn on stage, proudly showcasing their creations and sharing their visions.

Many of the entries drew heavily on the aristocratic styles from the previous century.

Throughout the presentations, Janice remained a silent observer, her face betraying no emotion.

Her serenity was rooted in the realization that the competitors were mediocre at best; their designs were visually pleasing yet lacked depth.

A sigh escaped her lips. Having stepped away from the fashion scene for years, she returned to find it stagnant, if not regressed.

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Chapter 14:

Meanwhile, Laurie watched Janice discreetly, smirking to herself, mistaking Janice's silence for confusion about the designs.

What did Janice's acquaintance with JE matter?

Ignorance in design wasn't remedied by mere associations.

Laurie's prejudiced view clouded her judgment, making her forget who had truly been the genius behind the design Delilah now possessed.

Then, it was Delilah's turn to display her design.

The audience was enraptured, their collective breath taken away by the sheer ingenuity of her work.

“This is absolutely breathtaking! The design splendidly captures the essence of a princess—graceful, noble, and distinctively elegant!”

“Hardly surprising, considering Delilah is Laurie’s daughter. Such extraordinary flair for design is indeed a rarity.”

“There’s no question about it—Delilah will undoubtedly take home the first prize in this contest.”

No other contestant elicited such enthusiastic acclaim from the audience. Delilah alone garnered their overwhelming applause, a clear indicator she would snag the top award.

The rest of the competitors voiced no objections to this verdict. The superiority of Delilah’s design was so apparent after its unveiling that it left no room for dispute.

Onstage, Delilah threw a confident, almost arrogant look at Janice. Though the design originated from Janice, she was the one basking in all its glory.

Catching Delilah’s glance, Janice’s lips twisted into a sly smile.

Feeling a flutter of unease, Delilah pondered Janice’s intentions. Was Janice about to assert ownership of the design during the judging?

Delilah scoffed inwardly. If Janice dared to make such a claim, she was going to be disappointed.

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Armed with the original sketches, Delilah was prepared. Lacking proof, Janice’s claims would fall flat.

At the critical moment, Delilah could assume the role of a wronged innocent, perhaps shedding strategic tears. The crowd would inevitably rally to her side, casting Janice as the villain.

This revelation steadied Delilah’s nerves, infusing her with a surge of confidence. She presented her design with poise, then gracefully exited the stage, her demeanor that of a champion. The designs of all contestants illuminated the venue as the host reclaimed the spotlight.

“Ladies and gentlemen, you’ve witnessed the remarkable talents before you. I suspect you’ve already picked your favorites, but now, let’s turn to our esteemed judges for the official scores.”

As the scores were unveiled, the audience’s eyes were riveted on the board, where Delilah’s numbers climbed resolutely to the top.

“Astounding! A unanimous perfect score from the panel.”

“Delilah’s skills are exactly what you’d expect from someone under Laurie’s dedicated mentoring. Who else but JE could possibly rival such flair?”

“Oh, what a match that would be! Imagine if JE were here—might she have considered taking Delilah under her wing?”

Amid the buzz, it seemed clear—Delilah was the undeniable frontrunner.

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Chapter 15:

Laurie, unable to contain her glee, shot a sly glance at Janice, anticipating signs of jealousy or bitterness. Yet, Janice appeared undisturbed, her composure intact.

A subtle scoff escaped Laurie, her thoughts filled with the belief that Janice's bravado was purely an act.

In her eyes, Janice was a shadow, completely overshadowed by Delilah's brilliance.

The host's voice boomed once again, capturing everyone's attention.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the verdict is in. Your champion is none other than Delilah Edwards. Let's put our hands together for her!"

The hall erupted into enthusiastic applause, each clap echoing louder than the last, as if in fear of not sufficiently impressing Laurie. Amidst this cacophony, only two figures, Janice and Aiden, remained unmoved.

Aiden's gaze lingered on Janice, his eyes sparkling with a trace of mirth.

Janice remained eerily still, her intentions shrouded in mystery. Given her previously cutting remarks, he suspected she had schemes brewing that would not allow Delilah's celebration to remain undisturbed.

Was she perhaps plotting the perfect moment to strike, to topple Delilah right at the peak of her triumph?

A sly smile crept across Aiden's usually impassive face, hinting at his anticipation.

"And now, we invite Mr. Layne Morris to present the prestigious award," the host declared, steering the attention to the stage once more.

Layne stepped up, his demeanor solemn yet commanding as he grasped the gleaming trophy.

"This trophy is not just a symbol but the pinnacle of achievement in the world of fashion design, reserved for the brightest stars of our next generation. May our distinguished awardee continue to pave new paths and set new paradigms in the fashion industry. Let us now welcome Delilah Edwards to the stage, to award her this token of prestige."

Delilah rose to her feet, her chin subtly elevated, gracefully lifting the edge of her gown as she glided onto the stage with dignified presence.

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Laurie observed Delilah with a face full of pride. This was her daughter, not by blood, but surpassing her own in grace and compliance.

As Delilah approached the trophy and extended her hand towards it, a sudden eruption of applause sliced through the silence.

All eyes turned toward the commotion, only to find Janice, her face etched with a cold smirk, clapping. “Miss Edwards, I must thank you—you’ve really set a new standard for shamelessness.”

“Janice, what on earth are you talking about?” Laurie sprang to her feet, her eyes blazing with fury as she faced Janice. “I might understand if jealousy has clouded your judgment, but this is Delilah’s time to shine. Restrain yourself!”

Janice stood, her eyes dripping with scorn as they locked onto Delilah.

The intensity of that disdainful stare shook Delilah to her core. Was the confrontation about to escalate?

Was Janice about to boldly claim the design as her own in front of everyone?

If that was her plan, Delilah wouldn’t stop her.

She was more than ready to prove that Janice’s efforts were in vain.

“Mrs. Edwards, didn’t I just say?” Janice’s voice was calm, but it carried an edge. “I’m curious to see just how much of a genius your daughter is. Indeed, a genius—but a genius in theft!” The word “theft” echoed sharply, igniting an uproar across the room.

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