

A Thousand Faces Hide The Genius Heiress' Wrath

Chapter 51:

“Delilah, how are you coming along with your work?” Stella regained her composure, her voice returning to its typical detached tone. “Don’t worry if you’re struggling with the design. Not everyone has the innate gift that Janice possesses.”

“I... I can do it. But...” Delilah was anxious. Suddenly, her eyes widened, and with a theatrical gasp, she collapsed to the floor. “My stomach is killing me.”

Janice observed the scene with a resigned shrug, accustomed to Delilah’s flair for drama.

Stella, concern etching her features, quickly went to Delilah’s side. “What’s wrong? Should I call an ambulance?”

Delilah, pallid and shaky, tried to rise. “No, I can manage. I have a concept ready to go. I can’t let Kenneth down—I’ll finish the design.”

As Stella caught sight of Delilah’s frail appearance, a deep sense of concern washed over her. “Take a moment to calm down, and try to regulate your breathing. It might help you feel better.”

“Goodness, Delilah, you seem so fragile. First a mango allergy, and now a stomach ache? It’s astonishing you’ve managed to make it this far,” Janice quipped with a sharp edge of sarcasm. She glanced at Kenneth, noting his apparent lack of concern, and speculated whether he had seen through Delilah’s act.

“I know you despise me, Janice. But believe me, I’m genuinely suffering right now,” Delilah murmured faintly, her expression pained as she rubbed her stomach with a theatrical grimace. “I might not have your knack for design, but I’m putting my all into improving.”

As she spoke, tears cascaded down her cheeks, each one a testament to her resolve. “I promise, even without your gift, I will not be outdone by you.”

With a determined effort, Delilah rose to her feet, her body swaying slightly as she reached for her sketchpad to resume her work. Just then, the abrupt ring of Kenneth’s phone sliced through the tension.

He shot a glance at the caller ID, his eyebrows knitting together in frustration before he answered with evident reluctance.

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“I see,” Kenneth muttered curtly before ending the call after a short exchange. “Enough, Delilah. From this point forward, you and Janice will both serve as Stella’s assistants.”

His gaze then turned to Stella, adopting a grave tone. “They are now your responsibility. We must accelerate our project with Freak Design. Be aware of the repercussions should we encounter any setbacks.”

“Absolutely,” Stella responded, her face set in a resolute expression, fully recognizing how crucial the project was to Delgado Jewelry.

Kenneth, having recently ascended to the CEO role somewhat unexpectedly, was particularly reliant on the success of this venture with Freak Design to cement his leadership.

Turning his attention to Janice, Kenneth’s stern facade softened somewhat. “I’m eager to see what you’ll bring to the table,” he said expectantly.

With a meaningful glance at Stella, he departed the room with her following closely behind.

“Still pretending, Delilah?” Janice scoffed, arms folded across her chest, her expression dripping with scorn.

Delilah, who had been donning a guise of sorrow, suddenly let her true emotions surface. Her demeanor changed as abruptly as a page being turned. “Janice, what have you done to sway Kenneth? Why does he seem to favor you so much?”

“Simply put, because I possess beauty, kindness, and talent,” Janice replied nonchalantly, shrugging her shoulders. “He’s the future heir of the Delgado family, after all—not as easily deceived as the Edwards family, who couldn’t see through someone as manipulative as you.”

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A surge of anger and bitterness swelled within Delilah, coloring her cheeks a fierce red. The thought of Janice flaunting her newfound position was unbearable. Why couldn’t Janice just vanish from her life?

“Don’t you dare get too full of yourself! Kenneth will be mine sooner or later,” Delilah snarled, her eyes flashing with defiance.

“Tsk. It takes a lot of nerve to say something that ridiculous. Do you really think everyone is as gullible as the Edwards family?” Janice’s lips curled into a scornful grin as she shook her head.

Delilah, rendered speechless by rage, suddenly erupted into mocking laughter. “Indeed, the Edwards are fools, but aren’t they also your family? Absolutely pathetic, being thrown out by a bunch of dim-witted morons.”

At this, Janice’s anger flared, and she slapped Delilah sharply across the face. Before Delilah could retaliate, Janice seized her by the cheek and slammed her against the wall. “I’ve been far too lenient with you. How dare you provoke me like this?”

Delilah’s eyes widened in shock, her voice lost to Janice’s dominating presence.

“Let’s set the record straight,” Janice declared, her eyes narrowing into slits, a chilling gleam sending shivers down Delilah’s spine. “They didn’t throw me out. I walked away on my own terms.”

Observing Delilah’s fearful look, Janice’s stern face softened into a sinister smile. “Scared, are you? Calm down, I’ll spare you for now. The fun part is still to come. Soon, I’ll expose their adopted daughter for the heartless ingrate she is, and reveal the true brilliance of the daughter they rejected. I’ll make sure they choke on their own stupidity.”

After her sharp words, Janice turned and walked away, leaving Delilah standing in the vast, empty room.

Suddenly, a phone call disrupted the silence.

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Delilah was jolted back to the present, her eyes darting to the caller ID. Overwhelmed by a sudden wave of anguish, she stammered, “Lowell...”

Upon hearing Delilah’s tearful voice, Lowell asked with concern, “Delilah, what’s happened? Has Kenneth been giving you trouble?”

“No,” Delilah sniffled, wiping her tears. “It’s Janice. She’s got a job at Delgado Jewelry as well.”

“What?” Lowell exclaimed, his tone laced with disbelief. “That ingrate has the audacity to show her face at Delgado Jewelry? I’m calling Kenneth this instant to make him turn her away.”

“Lowell, you can’t do that,” Delilah interjected feebly. “Kenneth holds Janice in high regard. It’s unlikely he’ll turn her away.”

“Since when did that ungrateful little pest get so competent?” Lowell’s voice dripped with contempt towards Janice. “Don’t stress. I’ll have a word with him.”

Kenneth to ensure he looks out for you. If Janice even thinks about crossing you, I’ll make sure she regrets it.”

“Lowell, please, don’t. Janice has been ostracized by the Edwards family. Her turning up at Delgado Jewelry must mean she’s desperate.” Delilah’s voice was heavy with resignation as she sighed. “I’m not scared of her coming after me. I know I can handle it. It’s just that I’ve been feeling drained, and my mind’s been cloudy, which might affect my future designs.”

“Don’t let that concern you. Mom’s a designer too. She could secretly do the designs for you.”

“Really?”

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“Of course!” Lowell’s voice was firm and encouraging. “Once I’m home, I’ll discuss it with Dad and get Mom on board. She cares about you more than anything and wouldn’t stand to see you struggle.”

“Lowell, you’re a lifesaver! I love you more than anyone!” They exchanged a few more heartfelt words before Delilah disconnected the call, her face setting into a steely mask once the warmth of the conversation faded.

She mused over the new Janice, who had toughened up, becoming both strong-willed and shrewd. Yet, she had the backing of the Edwards family. What allies did Janice have? That worthless cripple? Or JE, the elusive top designer in the industry?

Delilah’s gaze sharpened with resolve. Clearly, old tactics wouldn’t work with Janice anymore.

Leaving Delgado Jewelry, Janice checked her watch, expecting Aiden’s imminent arrival.

However, her phone vibrated with an unexpected message, making her frown slightly.

Before she could craft a reply, a black SUV halted abruptly in front of her.

With a heavy sigh of acceptance, Janice swung the door open and stepped into the vehicle.

“Janice!”

“Janice!”

Seated inside the SUV were three individuals—a woman and two men.

The driver, a broad-shouldered man with a military-style buzz cut, had an aura of intimidation. Yet, when his eyes met Janice’s, the harshness in his gaze melted into a gentler expression.

The other man had a wild mop of hair, as if he’d never met a comb in his life, and his thick glasses gave him a scholarly vibe. Despite appearing somewhat detached, his eyes were keen, scanning everything with acute awareness.

The woman exuded a playful charm, her hair styled in youthful pigtails and her attire casual, echoing the vibrancy of a spirited teen.

Janice slid into the passenger seat, her long legs crossing with regal nonchalance. She paid no mind to her companions, her attention captured instead by her phone. After a brief pause, she typed out a message to Aiden.

“Sorry, something just came up unexpectedly. You don’t need to pick me up anymore.”

Upon receiving her text, Aiden gazed at the ominous black SUV before him and smiled faintly. “Find out everything about that black SUV.”

“Understood.”

With a furrowed brow, Aiden muttered under his breath, “Janice, you’re such a mystery. I can’t wrap my head around you.”

Back in the SUV, Janice tucked her phone into her bag and turned her attention to the pressing matter at hand. “So, what’s the big hurry? Why did you need to find me so badly?”

The man with glasses blurted out, “I heard you were ousted from the Edwards family. Is that true?”

“Indeed,” Janice confirmed with a nod, her expression unguarded. “I was going to tell you, but with all the chaos lately, it completely slipped my mind.”

“That’s fantastic! Finally, Janice! You’ve stopped being their little puppet and stood up for yourself!”

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At his words, the woman beside him, twirling a lollipop in her mouth, landed a punch on his shoulder. “Watch your mouth! How dare you call her a little puppet!”

The man with glasses rubbed his shoulder. “Ever since Janice returned to the Edwards family, she’s been striving for their approval. And when that adopted daughter hurled false accusations and her parents berated her, she bore it in silence. It tore me apart to see her suffer.”

A shadow of anger crossed the woman’s features.

Meanwhile, the driver’s hands clenched the steering wheel tighter, his veins standing out as he simmered with barely contained fury.

“It’s all behind us now,” Janice declared with a dismissive wave of her hand, prompting a hushed silence from the other three.

They were keenly aware of the trials she had faced over the last year. Despite their shared grief, they knew that any real change had to come from Janice herself.

Her expression softened into a gentle smile as she made eye contact with each of them. “Prescott, Leah, Costello, I’m back.” Those words struck a chord, and the three of them found their eyes brimming with heartfelt tears.

“Janice, the Edwards family truly doesn’t realize what they’re missing. They have no idea just how gifted and remarkable their daughter truly is,” Prescott Collins remarked, removing his glasses and wiping his eyes. “If they only knew you owned JE Consortium, and that giants like Routique Fashion and Freak Design, celebrated around the globe, fell under your leadership, they’d deeply regret their blindness.”

“Absolutely,” Leah Sugden chimed in with a disdainful snort, twirling her lollipop. “Janice is a powerhouse in medicine, design, hacking, and countless other areas. Yet, they discarded her like she was nothing. They’re pathetic idiots, too blind to see what’s right in front of them.”

Janice merely shook her head, a sad smile touching her lips. She was aware that revealing her true stature might lure the Edwards family back.

But what she had yearned for was genuine familial love. On her return to the Edwards family, she had dimmed her brilliance, adopting the guise of an ordinary girl, hoping they would love her.

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Sadly, she had given them too much credit.

“While you might be laying it on a bit thick, there’s no denying the Edwards are truly pathetic idiots,” said Janice.

“Janice!” Costello Barker called out. “Should I step in and make them wish they hadn’t crossed you?”

“Don’t even think about it, Costello!” Janice exclaimed, her hand slicing through the air for emphasis. “If you take action, the whole of Efrery might be turned upside down. In a

way, I owe the Edwards family my thanks. They've stripped away the last shreds of hope I clung to for my family. From this moment, I'm living for myself."

A heavy silence settled over the car.

Her friends all knew how deeply Janice had once longed for familial warmth—a longing that had initially drawn the trio together, spurring them on to their current successes. But now, with Janice's hopes dashed, it was evident that the Edwards family had inflicted deep wounds on her heart.

"Prescott, look into Aiden Green's car accident three years ago. I want to expose the conspiracy behind it," Janice suddenly said.

"Huh?" Prescott, bewildered, raked a hand through his unkempt hair. "Janice, why are you digging into Aiden's past?"

With a smile, Janice turned to face him. "Because Aiden is my husband now. If anyone thinks they can mess with my husband, I have to set them straight, right?"

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“What?” The revelation sent a shock wave through the vehicle as the three voiced their astonishment in chorus.

“What’s with all the stunned faces?” Janice inquired, a playful smirk playing at the corners of her mouth.

Prescott was beside himself, hands buried in his hair as disbelief washed over his face. “Janice, are you kidding me? You’re actually married?”

“Yes.”

“And you’re just this calm about it?” Prescott’s perception of Janice, as a fierce and independent force, seemed to shatter right before his eyes. To him, she had always been a lone queen, a woman whose brilliance needed no man’s shadow. Yet, here she was, nonchalantly revealing her marriage.

It felt like the end of the world.

Leah, who was usually in sync with Prescott's thoughts, let her lollipop fall to the floor in shock. "Janice, this can't be real. What sort of trickery has this man used to mess with your head?"

With a jarring screech, the car jerked to a stop.

Costello, silent till now, turned sharply to look at Janice, his eyes piercing.

His gaze seemed to ask whether that man had drugged Janice, ready to confront him if necessary.

"Stop!" Janice exclaimed, raising her hand to silence them, a wry smile crossing her face. "You all are overreacting. It's just a marriage certificate, and yet here you are, losing your minds. If I were actually walking down the aisle, what? Would you resort to murder?"

"Wait just a second," Leah said, her brow furrowing as she cast a wary glance at Janice. "Janice, are you telling us it's just a certificate, not an actual marriage? What exactly does that mean?"

Janice let out a weary sigh before responding. “To put it simply, Aiden and I got legally married as part of an arrangement. Once our agreement concludes, we plan to dissolve the marriage.” A collective sigh of relief escaped her friends’ lips.

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“Even if it’s only an arrangement, I can’t say I’m thrilled about it,” Prescott remarked, adjusting his glasses with a hint of irritation. “Janice, engaging in a mere contract with that man? He’s definitely getting the better end of the deal.”

“Indeed!” Leah exclaimed, throwing her hands up in exasperation. “But ultimately, it’s Janice’s call. She’s always been stubborn. What else can we possibly do about it?” The group lapsed into silence for a brief moment.

After a while, Prescott managed to shake off the somber mood that had settled on him since learning of Janice’s marriage to another.

He straightened his glasses. “Janice, I’ve just learned that Edwards Group is bidding on a project.”

Janice, intrigued, leaned forward slightly. “Which project is that?”

“It’s a major development venture in the western suburbs, spearheaded by Forest Corp. They’re opening it up for external bids.”

A sharp spark lit up in Janice's eyes, and she instinctively brought her hand to her chin, her mind racing.

Forest Corp had climbed the ranks in recent years, yet the mastermind behind its ascent remained shrouded in secrecy.

It was odd, Janice thought, given her vast network and resources, that she hadn't been able to uncover even the slightest detail about the enigmatic owner.

She had a knack for unveiling the intricacies of Efrery's most influential business figures and their operations with ease. But this owner, whoever they were, had mastered the art of remaining a ghost, eluding even her far-reaching grasp.

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“Janice, isn’t it time we hit back at Edwards Group?” Prescott queried, his eyes glinting ominously behind his glasses. “They messed with you, so it’s about time they got what’s coming to them.”

“There’s no need,” Janice responded, shaking her head dismissively. “They won’t secure the bid, regardless of our actions. I know what Edwards Group is capable of.”

She was keenly aware that the group’s rapid advancement over the previous year was primarily due to her own efforts. Now that she had severed ties with the Edwards family, their prospects for continued aggressive expansion were bleak. Without her guidance, Lowell, the vice president of Edwards Group, was essentially incapable of drafting a competitive bid proposal.

“Guys, you didn’t travel all this way just to discuss this, did you?” Janice changed the subject.

At her question, Prescott and Leah exchanged a look, their expressions clouding over with concern.

“Who’s in trouble?” Janice pressed, noticing their sudden change in demeanor.

“It’s Glenn,” Prescott replied, his voice heavy with sorrow. “He’s suffered a sudden stroke. While the doctors were able to save his life, he remains comatose. I believe you’re the only one who can help him, Janice.”

A pang shot through Janice’s heart as a kindly face flickered in her mind.

If the Edwards family was her family by blood, then Glenn Haynes was undeniably like family to her.

“Do you have the medical records?” Janice inquired, her voice steady despite the turmoil within.

Prescott nodded, extending a file towards her. “The doctors suspect that Glenn might be trapped in a persistent vegetative state, possibly never to awaken.”

As Janice flipped through the medical documents, her mind raced, piecing together a course of action.

“Considering his grim prognosis, surgery appears to be the most viable treatment at this moment.” She paused, a frown knitting her brows. “Then why has the surgery not been attempted yet?”

“You’re correct. Surgery could indeed mark a significant turnaround in his health. However, the doctors are hesitant to proceed.”

With a decisive snap, Janice shut the file and fixed Prescott with a resolute gaze. “I get it. I’ll perform the surgery.”

Instantly, Prescott’s and Leah’s faces lit up with hopeful smiles. “Janice, that’s incredible news. With your expertise, we’re confident Glenn will pull through.”

“Truly, it’s quite disheartening,” Janice remarked, her tone tinged with irritation. “Are today’s doctors overly cautious? Glenn’s procedure isn’t exactly rocket science, yet it seems everyone is too afraid to proceed.”

Prescott and Leah exchanged uncomfortable glances.

Given Glenn’s advanced age, the surgery posed certain risks, and most doctors, averse to risking their reputations without guaranteed outcomes, opted against performing it.

Lost in thought, Janice stared out the car window at the bustling streets, musing aloud, “It’s been a long time since I last visited Glenn. This might be the perfect chance to see him again.” With a faint shake of her head, a wry laugh escaped her lips. “The irony of such unfortunate timing for our reunion isn’t lost on me.”

Meanwhile, returning from his stroll, Aiden noticed the absence of Alcott and Nina, who were probably tied up in another of their endless meetings or social engagements.

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He shrugged indifferently, accustomed to being the least occupied of the Green family.

“Aiden!”

The voice broke his reverie as Bart appeared from the kitchen, his hands carefully balancing a beautifully crafted cake. He wore a broad grin as he approached Aiden.

Aiden eyed the tempting confection and then shot Bart a mischievously skeptical look. “What? Are you trying to poison me with this cake?”

There was a brief pause as Bart appeared startled, then he began shaking his head vigorously. “Aiden, I want to offer my apologies. Last time, I really messed up by not making things clear, and Dad and Nina understood you because of it. I stood in line at that famous bakery to pick out this cake for you, hoping you’d forgive me.”

Aiden, seated in his wheelchair with his hands neatly folded on his lap, leaned back slightly. His expression was one of disdain, as if he were watching a circus act. “Now that Mom and Dad aren’t around, why continue this pointless act?”

“What are you implying, Aiden? I’m genuinely confused,” Bart replied, his expression a mix of confusion and hurt. “I’m truly sorry. Please, you have to accept my apology.”

“And what if I don’t?” Aiden responded with a hint of boredom.

“You won’t accept it?” Bart paused, taken aback, his earlier look of injury shifting to one of darkness. “Well, then I guess I’ll just have to make sure you do.”

He lifted the cake higher, his eyes gleaming with a disturbing intent. “This is a gift, Aiden, and you don’t get to refuse it! What right do you have, stuck in that wheelchair, to deny me?” His face, once gentle, now twisted into a sinister mask. Despite this, Aiden’s gaze remained icy, his demeanor unflappable and almost amused by Bart’s escalating fury.

“And what’s with that smug look? Do you really think you stand a chance to lead the Green family in your condition?” Bart’s irritation escalated under Aiden’s scrutinizing look, and he became visibly more distressed. “You’re nothing without Grandpa’s will. Go

on, have your laugh. Only someone with both feet on the ground, not someone confined to a wheelchair like you, can lead the Green family.”

Aiden released a gentle sigh, his tone laced with pity. “How utterly pitiful!”

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“What did you just say?”

“You, a bastard, dreaming of leading the Green family? How pitiful indeed.”

Bart seized Aiden by the chin, his eyes burning with fury. “It seems you’re the one lost in dreams! Let me bring you back to reality.”

He then tried to force the cake into Aiden’s mouth, a clear attempt to demean him and assert his dominance.

However, just as he moved, a hand darted in and snatched the cake from his grasp. “Wow, this cake looks nice.”

Bart froze, his gaze lifting to find Janice standing behind Aiden, her sudden appearance catching him off guard.

“Janice?” His hand fell away from Aiden’s chin, his tough facade melting into a flustered, meek expression.

Aiden massaged his chin, giving Janice a meaningful look, silently thanking her for her intervention.

“Oh, it’s delightful,” Janice noted nonchalantly, biting into the cake and smiling brightly.

But her expression turned icy as she slammed the remainder of the cake onto Bart’s head, leaving him stunned. Even Aiden looked on in surprise.

“Who do you think you are, daring to touch my husband?” Janice narrowed her eyes, the cold glint in her gaze cutting like ice.

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“Janice, what on earth are you implying? I’m at a loss here,” Bart responded, his voice quivering with feigned vulnerability as he stared back at her in mock horror.

However, his act only amused Janice, seasoned as she was in the art of confronting sly characters like Delilah, a notorious schemer.

“You owe Aiden an apology!”

Janice’s voice boomed, sending chills down the spines of the servants.

Their eyes widened in awe at the boldness of Aiden’s newlywed wife. The turbulent times ahead for the Green family seemed inevitable.

“You expect an apology from me?” Bart’s eyes bulged in disbelief as he faced Janice.

“Is there a problem?” Janice retorted sharply. “How dare you, an illegitimate son, show such disrespect towards the rightful heir of the Green family? This is unacceptable. If you fail to apologize to Aiden today, I will have no choice but to teach you a lesson.”

Aiden raised his eyebrows. “Janice, how are you going to teach him a lesson?”

Janice replied with a shrug, “If he refuses to apologize, you’ll see.”

With a hearty chuckle, Aiden couldn’t deny how right it felt to have Janice standing with him.

Bart had long been a thorn in his side, though he had to conceal his distaste to avoid blowing his cover.

Now, with Janice intervening, the forthcoming days looked to be filled with intrigue.

Bart’s face was set in a hard, grim expression, his anger boiling over to the point where his fists were balled so tightly that his nails dug into the flesh of his palms.

He was utterly baffled by the audacity of Aiden’s wife. How could she possibly be so bold? Didn’t she grasp the gravity of the situation? How on earth could someone with a disability command any respect or hold any sway over the powerful Green family? To any keen observer, it was clear as day that the reins of the Green family were destined to land in his hands. This had been an inevitability ever since he had been brought back.

“Apologize now! Are you deaf or just stupid?” Janice’s chilling voice left no space for defiance, freezing Bart in place with nowhere to turn.

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But he couldn’t bring himself to apologize. To do so would be to tarnish his pride irreparably.

“Someone, get me a stick.” Janice’s command cut through the air. The servants exchanged wary looks, their loyalties torn. They knew the dynamics of the family well. If it were in the past, they would have rallied behind Bart without a second thought, but Janice’s appearance muddled the waters, casting doubt on their old certainties.

“What seems to be the issue here? Does my wife’s word carry no weight? Are you all questioning my place as the rightful successor of the Green family?” Aiden’s voice was calm but carried a weight that was hard to ignore.

The servants visibly tensed, and one quickly stepped forward with a stick in hand.

Janice accepted the stick, balancing it thoughtfully in her grip, a chilling smile playing on her lips.

Bart's eyes widened in fear, his heart pounding. Could this audacious woman truly be contemplating what he feared?

"Mrs. Green, your parents-in-law will be home shortly," one of the servants, who had been close to Bart, interjected cautiously, hoping to diffuse the escalating tension.

Janice delivered a sharp slap, her hand connecting abruptly with the servant's cheek. The sound echoed, leaving the room draped in a stunned silence.

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“When the masters are discussing important affairs, it is not the place of servants to interfere. Haven’t you learned that by now?” Janice spoke in a tone that was deceptively gentle, yet to the servants, it bore the chilling touch of malevolence.

“Today, anyone who speaks out of turn will find themselves expelled from the Green family. Remember, this family’s legacy was forged by my husband’s grandfather, and Aiden is the successor appointed by him.”

Her declaration hung heavily in the air, instilling a palpable fear among the servants.

From his wheelchair, Aiden adjusted his posture, settling back with a satisfied grin, admiring Janice’s commanding presence. She stood resolute and impressive, a vision of authority that was both awe-inspiring and terrifying.

However, to Bart, she appeared unhinged, her actions bordering on the irrational.

Janice turned smoothly, her eyes locking onto Bart as she brandished the stick once more. “I will ask you one more time. Will you apologize or not?”

Bart winced, his face twisting into a sorrowful mask. “Janice, what did I do to deserve this? I’ve done nothing wrong. I merely wanted Aiden to taste the cake I brought for him.”

Janice’s lips curled into a sneer. “Feigning innocence, huh? Spare me that bullshit. I’ve encountered many like you before. Such tactics will not sway me and will only lead to one end.”

“What?”

Bart barely had time to register the question before Janice swung the stick, striking him sharply.

He couldn't hold back a cry of agony, his eyes wide as they met Janice's gaze.

She was completely out of her mind!

Without hesitation, Janice hit him again, this time targeting his knees.

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Another cry escaped Bart as his legs buckled, forcing him to the floor.

“How dare you?” he spat, fury mingling with pain, his teeth clenched. “When Dad and Nina get back, you're going to pay for this!”

“You think they’ll punish me?” Janice’s voice was cold, her eyes piercing as she looked down at the crumpled Bart. “Do you believe they’ll do anything but praise me when they see what I’ve done?” Fear flickered across Bart’s face, heightening at the sight of Janice’s smirk.

With that, she tossed the stick away dismissively. “Consider this a lesson. Respect your brother. Next time, I won’t hold back.”

Janice’s expression softened into a smile as she turned to Aiden. “Honey, did I do the right thing?”

“Without a doubt!” Aiden’s eyes momentarily sparked with a subtle warmth of affection. “As long as you’re the one doing it, it’s always right.”

“Oh, what a smooth talker you are, honey.” Janice reached out and tapped his nose with her fingertip.

Caught off guard, Aiden felt a sudden rush of warmth envelop his senses, leaving him momentarily stunned as a delightful tingling sensation radiated from the touch.

Oblivious to his bewilderment, Janice moved to stand behind his wheelchair, her hands taking hold of the handles. She leaned in close, her voice a comforting whisper. “From now on, I’ve got your back.”

“Got my back?” Aiden chuckled, his voice rich with contentment. A deep sense of satisfaction washed over him, not just from her words, but from witnessing Bart’s evident irritation.

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With a triumphant smile, Janice began pushing the wheelchair back towards their room.

Behind them, Bart watched, his gaze seething with malice as he shakily got to his feet.

“Mr. Green!” The servants rushed to his side, eager to offer their support.

“Fuck off!” Bart barked, his eyes piercing and furious.

The servants recoiled, taken aback by his hostility. Janice’s earlier defiance had left them feeling vulnerable and uncertain — how could they possibly stand up to the masters they served? Before Janice’s arrival, Bart had often showcased his dominance to Aiden, leading to speculations that he might take over the leadership of the Green family. However, Janice’s presence had thrown such certainty into doubt.

Within the confines of the room, Janice’s laughter resonated, filled with genuine amusement.

“Compared to Delilah, Bart’s manipulations are downright embarrassing.” Sitting on the bed, legs crossed, she clicked her tongue. “If it were Delilah, she would have already called our parents for backup.”

Observing Janice’s exuberant joy, Aiden felt a sudden, unexpected lightness in his chest.

“Aiden, what did you think of my performance earlier? Were you impressed?” Janice inquired, her laughter tapering off as she turned her gaze to Aiden.

“More than impressed,” Aiden responded with a nod. “It seems the value of having you as my wife is far greater than I imagined.”

“Totally!” Janice quipped, a sly grin on her face as she strutted towards Aiden. She leaned close, her eyes twinkling mischievously. “I put on quite the spectacle for you. Should there be a reward for my efforts?”

“What do you want?” Aiden narrowed his eyes, his gaze filled with warning.

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Unperturbed by his warning tone, Janice boldly reached out, tilting his chin upward with her finger. “Really, I want for nothing, except perhaps a man. What do you say? Consider committing yourself to me?”

Aiden’s eyes narrowed, the corners of his lips curving into a faint smile. “Didn’t I already tell you something about this?”

“Oh, I’m fabulous at everything—except remembering.” With an exaggerated gesture, her mouth opened wide in mock surprise. “And what exactly did you tell me? Was it a vow to commit yourself entirely to me?”

As Aiden’s expression changed, his eyes darkening with emotion, Janice stood abruptly, turning away just as he seemed on the verge of losing his composure.

Aiden watched her retreating back, a frown creasing his brow as his irritation melted away.

“Aiden, have you heard about the new development project in the western suburbs?”

“Yes, why do you ask?” Aiden sighed, resigned to her rapid changes in topic, which always seemed to leave him scrambling to keep up.

Janice spun around, her smile bright and mischievous. “I’m aware the Green family hasn’t shown much interest in this project, but...”

“I see where you’re going with this,” Aiden interjected, understanding dawning on him as he caught her drift. “For this bid, I will let the Green family get involved, and you’ll be in charge.”

Janice clapped her hands in delight, her entire demeanor lighting up. “You understand me so well. You’re so considerate that I almost want to kiss you for that.”

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