

Wrath 111

Chapter 111:

As Nina walked away, Janice joked, "Aiden, should we make our fake marriage a real one? You might not be perfect, but Nina's incredible. I can't stand the thought of losing her."

Aiden's expression tightened, clearly annoyed. "I'm not perfect?"

"Well... let's just say you don't smile often, which gives you a cold and unapproachable vibe," Janice said.

Aiden responded dryly, "Thanks for the insight."

"You're welcome. It's only fair," Janice said with a laugh.

Aiden fell quiet. Yet, he had been smiling more these days.

"Kenneth?" Janice was slightly startled. In addition to Kenneth, she noticed another familiar figure. "Well, well, Bart is here as well."

Aiden turned and saw them as well.

Bart was dressed sharply, interacting with the social elites while maintaining a careful distance from Kenneth, as though they were mere strangers.

"Does your mom know Bart is here?" Janice said, touching her chin.

Aiden, playing with his bracelet, answered seriously, "She definitely doesn't know. But my dad... I suspect he might have had a hand in Bart's attendance."

“Should I go say hello?” Janice’s smile turned sly. “It would be proper for me to greet my brother-in-law, wouldn’t it?”

Aiden paused in his fiddling with the bracelet and gave her a helpless look. “I suspect your greeting is merely an excuse to cause trouble.”

As they talked, Janice was already making her way towards Bart.

Bart stood with effortless grace, donning a meticulously tailored suit, his posture relaxed yet dignified. A glass of champagne twinkled in one hand, the other tucked behind him, projecting an aura of refined elegance. He was deeply engaged in a lively chat with a young woman, their laughter mingling in the air, creating a scene of perfect harmony. It seemed he was artfully portraying the image of the ideal gentleman, subtly weaving praises of his own merits into their conversation.

“Mr. Green, you seem incredibly wise. You must really love reading, am I right?” she inquired with a hint of admiration.

Bart offered a modest smile, his eyes looking downward as his lips raised slightly. “In my spare moments, I do indulge in reading. Recently, I’ve been engrossed in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.”

“That’s quite the coincidence—I’m reading *Macbeth* too.” Her tone hinted that she had let her guard slip, unknowingly wanting to connect with the man who shared her interests.

A smirk almost crept onto Bart’s face as his heart swelled with muted pride—gullible souls were always the easiest to bend to his will. By presenting himself as handsome, aligning with her preferences, and subtly promoting his own superiority, he was sure she would be charmed.

“Then surely you’ve also come across Shakespeare’s *King Lear*? It’s right up there with *Macbeth* as one of my top picks.” Bart cast his gaze towards the distant twinkling lights, swirling the champagne in his glass. The golden fluid inside shimmered slightly, casting an air of sophistication and depth around him.

“Well, well, well...” A teasing voice sliced through the serene moment, abruptly dispelling the mood Bart had carefully constructed. His heart plummeted even before he turned around.

“Bart, what a surprise to see you here!” Janice moved closer with an air of nonchalance, a teasing glint lighting up her eyes. Bart’s jaw visibly tightened.

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Wagging her finger in front of him, Janice chided, “How could you not greet me? You may be an illegitimate son, but the Green family blood still runs through your veins. I am your sister-in-law, after all.”

The truth dawned on Bart now—Janice was only there to mess with him. Her words not only highlighted his status as an illegitimate child but also forced him to acknowledge her familial tie, a deliberate move to embarrass him.

Such insinuations were sure to damage his reputation in front of any onlooker, particularly any potential romantic interests.

“Bart, who is this?” The woman’s gaze suddenly brightened upon noticing Janice. There was something unmistakably captivating about Janice. She radiated an elegant charm. Though she prided herself on her looks, the woman couldn’t help but feel overshadowed when standing next to Janice.

Janice’s presence was distinguished not just by her beauty but also by a bold, indomitable spirit that resonated deeply with the woman.

Bart had to reply, “She’s my sister-in-law, Janice.”

“Oh, so you’re Janice!” the woman exclaimed, her hand flying to cover her mouth as if she had encountered a celebrity. “I just overheard someone mention that a remarkable woman not only verified her Blue Heart as authentic but also compelled her detractor to kneel and sing. So it was you.”

“Indeed, that was me,” Janice responded, her voice tinged with a playful confidence as she gently placed a hand on the woman’s shoulder.

The woman, visibly delighted and star-struck, watched in fascination as Janice leaned closer to whisper, “Miss, do you know the type of man you’ll find most often in this world?” Puzzled, the woman paused to think before shaking her head.

“The ones who live in a delusion, thinking they’re superior to everyone else,” Janice remarked, throwing a meaningful glance at Bart.

Bart’s grip on the champagne glass tightened as he fought the urge to silence Janice. He had been so close to earning the girl’s trust, but Janice had ruined it.

Upon hearing what Janice said, the girl froze, a realization dawning on her. Her cheeks flushed, and she burst into laughter. “Janice, you’re so daring. No wonder you can make Delilah kneel.”

“Thank you,” Janice said with a soft chuckle. “What’s your name?”

“My name is Sierra Ramirez,” the girl replied.

“Sierra Ramirez?” Janice’s eyes narrowed slightly as she instantly grasped Bart’s strategy. He was working to win over the daughter of the Ramirez family to strengthen his own standing. If he secured Sierra’s loyalty, it would give him significant leverage in his rivalry with Aiden for control of the Green family. Unfortunately for him, Janice would not let him succeed.

“Ah, Sierra! My apologies for not recognizing you sooner,” Janice said warmly, clasping Sierra’s hands with genuine enthusiasm. “I’ve heard so much about you—refined, gracious, and incredibly beautiful. Now that I’ve met you, it’s clear your reputation is well-earned.”

Janice’s praise made Sierra blush even more, her natural shyness taking over. “Janice, you’re flattering me. Those are just rumors. I’m an ordinary person who happens to enjoy reading.”

“Ordinary? If Sierra is considered ‘common,’ then what word could possibly describe those less fortunate?” Janice continued, her praise unwavering. “In my eyes, you’re an angel.”

Sierra’s cheeks burned brighter. Janice was too skilled at flattery. How was she supposed to respond to this?

Bart's face darkened as he felt a strong urge to silence Janice. "Bart, I'm so sorry! I admire Sierra so much that I couldn't help but ramble. You don't mind, do you?" Janice pretended to be surprised after intentionally overlooking Bart.

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Bart forced a strained smile. "Of course not. I'm glad you two hit it off so quickly. I'm sure Sierra must feel lonely at times. Meeting you today must have been a pleasant surprise for her."

His gaze turned to Sierra with a hint of sympathy.

What a sly move!

He had implied that Sierra lacked friends and experienced loneliness, a calculated statement to make her feel seen and understood.

Generally, girls like Sierra, sensitive and naive, were often easily influenced by such carefully crafted remarks.

"Bart, it seems you and Sierra have more in common than I thought!" Janice said with a sigh, her expression taking on a deliberately somber tone. "After all, you must know what loneliness feels like too, since you've been away for so long. But don't worry. Even though you were born out of wedlock, now that you're back with the Green family, things are bound to improve."

Bart's mouth twitched. Janice's words were a calculated insult. Though she appeared sympathetic, each remark subtly mocked his status as a child born out of wedlock.

Sierra's expression grew increasingly uneasy, her gaze flicking between the two.

"Janice, maybe we shouldn't dwell on the past," said Bart.

"Oh, that reminds me!" Janice exclaimed. "Last time, you pushed your brother into the pond. But don't worry—he's already forgiven you! He's just too shy to bring it up himself. If you go and apologize, the two of you could finally reconcile."

Bart's grip on his champagne glass tightened to the point where his knuckles turned white.

Janice had not only dragged up an old incident but had completely twisted the narrative, painting him in a worse light. It was clear her goal was to destroy his image entirely in front of Sierra.

"Janice, are you saying that Bart pushed Aiden into the pond?" Sierra asked, looking a little surprised.

"Yes!" Janice scratched her head, looking quite troubled. "Well, I suppose it's normal for brothers to disagree and get into a scuffle now and then. I'm guessing that Aiden said something that Bart didn't like, which prompted him to push my husband."

"No, I didn't do it!" Bart protested vehemently. It was him who had fallen into the pond, after all.

But Janice delivered her story with such emotion, he couldn't even refute her words. He began to fear that Sierra would believe her and ultimately dislike him.

With her brows still furrowed, Janice placed her hands firmly on Bart's shoulders and said, "Go ahead, Bart. Go and make amends with Aiden. I'm sure he will forgive you."

Aiden had been watching them the entire time. Although he couldn't hear what they were saying, he could tell from the way Bart was getting increasingly upset that Janice had managed to outwit him.

But why was she suddenly looking his way?

Bart, too, turned his head to glance in Aiden's direction. Not only was he frustrated by this turn of events, but he was utterly humiliated, too.

"Bart, you should go apologize," Sierra urged. "You're still family. Don't let small misunderstandings ruin your relationship." Now that Sierra had bought Janice's version of events, Bart knew there was nothing he could say to clear his name. If he still refused to apologize after this, it might turn Sierra against him, and all his efforts would go down the drain.

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And so, to Aiden's complete bewilderment, Bart made his way over.

"I'm sorry, Aiden." Bart stood in front of him and muttered the apology with obvious reluctance.

Aiden could only blink at him in confusion.

Just then, Janice and Sierra joined them. The two women had only just met, but they seemed to be getting along pretty well. "That's more like it! You two should reconcile and be good brothers to each other from now on."

The two men found themselves at a loss, unable to even find the right words to say.

Sierra clapped her hands and laughed heartily. "You sure found yourself an excellent wife, Aiden."

Aiden glanced at Janice with a meaningful smile. "Yes, indeed! A truly extraordinary and remarkable wife!"

Janice understood what that look meant—he was wondering what she was up to now.

She lifted her chin and hummed, her eyes glinting with satisfaction. She was simply helping him deal with that manipulative bastard, Bart.

"Janice, can you come over here for a moment?" Nina called out and waved her over.

Janice wanted to torment Bart a bit more, but it looked like that plan was out the window. "Aiden, your mom's calling for me. I'll leave you guys for now." Aiden nodded.

"Actually, I think I'll go with you. I also have some things to discuss with my mom," Sierra said.

“Oh, sure.”

Janice and Sierra linked arms and walked away, leaving Aiden and Bart alone.

Aiden tilted his head to the side and shot Bart a mischievous look that was laced with unmistakable disdain.

Bart downed his champagne in one gulp. “Don’t get too cocky, Aiden. It won’t be long before you’re kicked out of the Green family for good.”

“Oh? Is that so?” Aiden fiddled with the bracelet around his wrist. “Remind me again—between us two, who is it that lives across the river from the Green family and spends every day staring at it with want and longing?” Bart’s expression changed slightly.

His current place was just across the river from the Green family. Just like Aiden had stated, he would often stand on his balcony and gaze at his former home, racking his brains for a way to return.

Bart never expected Aiden to know of this little habit of his.

“Are you spying on me?” he asked with narrowed eyes.

“I may be physically challenged, but my mind is still sharp.” Aiden watched Bart’s face contort into an ugly expression, his own gaze taking on a hint of danger. “You want to become the head of the Green family, right? You can dream on.”

“And where does a cripple like you get the audacity to think that you can defeat me?” Bart challenged, deliberately bringing up Aiden’s sore spot. “I may be illegitimate, but compared to a disabled son, we both know that Dad favors me more.”

Aiden brushed an imaginary piece of lint from his suit jacket. “So what if he favors you? The Green family isn’t his to control.” He locked eyes with Bart and added slowly, “Honestly, I don’t care all that

much about becoming the family head. But just because I don't want it doesn't mean that you can take it for yourself. Do you understand?"

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There was a loud crack as Bart's champagne glass broke in his tight grip, splashing the bubbly liquid all over his arm and shoes. Aiden quickly grabbed a napkin to shield himself from any errant splashes.

"Already losing your cool?" Aiden tilted his head and perched his cheek on his right palm. "You're not up to the task, Bart."

Bart took a deep breath and stormed away.

Aiden watched him retreat, angry at his defeat, and smirked.

Their confrontation didn't attract much attention, but Kenneth did glance their way. His gaze turned pensive as he noted Bart's sullen expression.

Just then, Aiden plucked a glass of champagne from the tray of a passing waiter and raised it towards Kenneth in a toast. Then he downed the drink in one go.

Was that an act of provocation? Or a gesture of goodwill? Kenneth narrowed his eyes, unsure of Aiden's intentions. He raised his own glass and drank his champagne in response.

Meanwhile, Nina was beaming as she held Janice's hand and introduced her to Leonie. "This is my daughter-in-law, Janice."

Despite being over fifty, Leonie never lacked the elegance and charm of her youth. But compared to Nina, Leonie was much more reserved.

Janice didn't like Leonie, so she merely offered a polite smile and didn't show much enthusiasm upon introduction.

Leonie scrutinized her closely. "She is quite pretty. It's no wonder she caught your eye, Nina. However, I've heard rumors saying that this young lady was kicked out of the Edwards family. Is that true?"

The atmosphere soon turned awkward at her words.

Nina opened her mouth to speak, but Janice squeezed her hand to stop her. "Mrs. Ramirez, what is your opinion of the Edwards family?"

Leonie sneered. "The Edwards family just got lucky. They took advantage of the Patterson family's misfortune and squeezed into their current position as one of the top four families in the city. If you ask me, I say they do not deserve to be regarded as such."

"Exactly." Janice nodded. "The Edwards family got to where they are now by sheer, dumb luck. They would have never made it this far with their own efforts. Fortunately, my mother-in-law here has great insight and recognized my value."

Leonie's expression changed, her gaze turning colder.

Janice's eloquent rebuttal had not only deflected Leonie's veiled insult, but she had also fired back with one of her own.

Leonie had been adamant that the Edwards family did not deserve their status and considered their disownment of Janice as utter foolishness. If she continued looking down on Janice from here on out, she would be just as blind and foolish as the Edwards family she detested.

Leonie had to admit, Janice did have a sharp tongue and quick wit.

"Mom, Janice is really impressive," Sierra chimed in. "I heard that just now, outside, the Edwards family was giving her trouble, and she managed to send them packing with just a few words."

"Really?" Leonie raised an eyebrow. "So the commotion outside was your doing."

Janice kept her smile, graceful under pressure. “Mrs. Ramirez, I apologize. The Edwards family is like a bad penny—always showing up uninvited. There’s little I can do to prevent that. Of course, I don’t hold you responsible for inviting them. I understand you were simply being inclusive, inviting people from all walks of life, and they happened to slip in.”

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She tactfully offered Leonie an out, leaving the decision to her discretion.

Sensing the tension, Nina decided it was time to change the subject. “Leonie, let’s drop the topic of the Edwards family. I heard you acquired a painting from JE’s childhood today. Is that true?”

With Nina’s intervention, Leonie felt compelled to show some deference. She nodded and said, “It was a fortunate coincidence that I obtained this painting. I imagine many here are curious about the kind of artwork JE produced in her youth.”

“Then why are you planning to auction it off?” Nina asked, her expression showing slight confusion. “Wouldn’t you prefer to add it to your collection?”

Leonie clarified, “The primary goal of this charity banquet is to raise funds, and featuring JE’s childhood painting has certainly drawn a crowd.”

Indeed, JE’s reputation was formidable. She had achieved the rare distinction of being a top-tier designer, a status that elevated her to the level of a celebrity. A pen that once belonged to JE could easily rake in millions at an auction, demonstrating the vast reach of her fame.

This exact reason compelled Janice to stay under the radar. If her identity were ever disclosed, the repercussions on her everyday life could be severe.

Despite her caution, she found herself curious about which of her childhood artworks Leonie had managed to secure.

Reflecting on her younger years, Janice remembered the pieces she had crafted, many of which she had sold to support the orphanage, their paths eventually crossing with various collectors.

Just then, Leonie cast a glance at Nellie, who was busy engaging with guests. Turning to Nina, she mentioned, "I have some urgent business to take care of; I must leave now."

"Take care, Mrs. Green, Janice," Nina replied.

As Leonie hurried off with Sierra towards Nellie, Janice's eyes narrowed, observing their brief interaction before they proceeded towards Kenneth.

A spark of curiosity lit within her. "Do you think Nellie and Kenneth are heading out on a date?"

"Huh?" Caught slightly off-guard, Nina hesitated, then her face lit up with understanding. "It does seem likely. It appears that the Ramirez and Delgado families might be drawing closer, perhaps even considering a marriage alliance."

"Will this affect the Green family?" Janice asked with a hint of curiosity.

With a lift of her chin and a flash of pride, Nina responded confidently, "Their alliance is simply for mutual support. They lack the credentials to pose any real threat to the Green family."

Observing Nina's assured demeanor, Janice understood it was rooted in the formidable reputation of the Greens. As the leading house among the four great families, their historical influence was not something easily rivaled by a simple union of the other two.

However, Janice couldn't shake off her concerns about internal conflicts within the Green family itself. She was wary of Alcott and Bart, who might be plotting behind the scenes, potentially allowing other families to exploit any emerging weaknesses. This was especially alarming given Bart's interactions with Kenneth shortly before Aiden's car accident.

What if their dealings were more sinister than they appeared, potentially endangering Aiden?

Nellie walked up to Kenneth with a champagne glass in hand. "Mr. Delgado, would you like a drink?"

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Kenneth looked at her, his demeanor detached and indifferent. "Miss Ramirez, why even bother?"

Nellie pulled back slightly, swirling the champagne in her glass, her face showing a trace of sadness. "You know, coming from powerful families, we rarely control our own lives. If we don't have this drink, I'll hear about it later, right?"

Kenneth's eyes briefly met Leonie's, who was nearby introducing Sierra to other influential women. Leonie occasionally glanced over at them. He knew about the planned marriage between their families. His parents hadn't explicitly stated it, but this charitable event seemed like a setup for him to meet Nellie.

"Fine," Kenneth said, raising his glass and touching it to Nellie's. They both took a sip.

Their interaction was symbolic of their situation, with hints of a family arrangement existing, but neither seemed eager to pursue anything deeper.

"Actually, you should be thinking about an arrangement with the Green family," Kenneth said, glancing into his glass. "As much as I hate to admit it, the Green family is undoubtedly stronger right now."

Nellie shook her head. "But as you pointed out, that's only for now."

She glanced at the man in a wheelchair not too far away, who, despite his disability, exuded a commanding aura that kept others at a distance. Despite his disability, he remained an undeniable force, exuding an intimidating presence that kept others at bay. Kenneth was impressive, but he didn't hold a candle to Aiden.

"The Green family is dealing with serious internal strife. Even Aiden's father believes Aiden will eventually lose," Nellie said, her voice rough with a touch of bitterness.

"You have feelings for Aiden," Kenneth's words struck at the heart of Nellie's secret.

Nellie's usually vibrant face showed signs of despair and resignation. "Yes, I do care for him, but as a Ramirez, I don't really have a say in the matter."

Kenneth felt a wave of empathy for Nellie. She had her own romantic preferences, yet her family obligations forced her to entertain suitors she had no interest in. This was the fate of women in the Ramirez family.

His encounter with Nellie, however, wasn't mandated. His mother had merely decided it was time for him to find a partner and had arranged this meeting accordingly. The final decision, however, remained with him.

"Kenneth, is there someone special to you?"

"Me?" Nellie's question caused Kenneth to reflect for a moment. He eventually shook his head. "Not really. My main priority is my career and pushing the Delgado family forward."

"You're such a workaholic," Nellie said, her head shaking in mild disbelief. "You remind me of Aiden in that way. He was a workaholic too. If not for his accident that impaired him, the Green family might now be an overwhelming power overshadowing others."

As Nellie spoke, both instinctively glanced at Aiden. Feeling their stare, Aiden raised his eyes to meet theirs.

His lips twisted into a playful grin, sending a chill through them. It was a glimpse of the brilliance he was known for. Despite his physical limitations, his commanding presence was intact.

"Those two are together now?" Aiden murmured to himself, narrowing his eyes. "It looks like the Ramirez and Delgado families are eyeing the Green family. Alcott and Bart are probably gearing up for their play as well." Aiden reclined casually, his grin turning sly.

Chapter 118:

"I'm looking forward to watching the spectacle you're all setting up for me."

Most of the guests at the charity gala had already found their seats. Once the host declared the event open, the guests located their assigned spots and settled in.

“Aiden, do you need a hand?” Janice offered, wearing a playful smile as she watched Aiden navigate his wheelchair. Aiden, maintaining a serious face, dismissed her playful comment and signaled to a waiter nearby. The waiter quickly understood and removed a chair from the table. Aiden smoothly moved his wheelchair into the vacated space.

Janice quirked an eyebrow, resting one hand on the table and the other under her chin. “You make it look so effortless. I thought I’d have to lift you into the seat myself.”

“Janice, is teasing me now your favorite pastime?” Aiden looked at her sharply.

Undeterred, Janice answered lightly, “I’m just spicing up our married life.”

Before Aiden could reply, Janice glanced at Nina beside her and said, “If there’s anything you like at the charity auction later, Nina, I’ll bid on it for you.”

“Oh, Janice, you’re so thoughtful. I can’t understand how Laurie could ignore such a wonderful daughter and favor that adopted one,” Nina said warmly, patting Janice’s hand. “Don’t worry, I’ll ensure you feel valued.”

After a quick look at Aiden, she continued, “And Aiden will take good care of you too. If he ever mistreats you, just tell me, and I’ll set him straight.”

“You’re the best,” Janice exclaimed, embracing Nina warmly. Nina, her eyes brimming with emotion and joy, gently patted Janice’s back.

She admired Janice for being not only compliant and sensible but also independent and strong—traits she saw in herself. Furthermore, Janice had managed to bring out a softer side in her usually stern son, coaxing more smiles from him. To Nina, Janice was nothing short of a godsend.

“Janice, if you see something you like, have Aiden buy it for you. He might lack in some areas, but money isn’t one of them.”

“No problem,” Janice responded, throwing a victorious look at Aiden, almost challenging him to open his wallet.

Aiden massaged his forehead, feeling a bit betrayed by his mother’s enthusiasm. Yet, the joy it brought her made any potential expense seem worthwhile.

Ever since his accident, Nina had been deeply concerned about finding a treatment for him, her mood often subdued. It was only after Janice joined the Green family that Nina’s spirits began to improve. Perhaps Janice truly was a godsend for them.

“Excuse me, may I sit here?” A gentle, melodious voice broke through the conversation, drawing Janice’s attention. She turned to see Sierra looking at her with timid eyes.

“Janice, can I join you?” she asked.

“Of course, there’s plenty of room. It’s just us three here,” Janice answered, a bit puzzled. “Aren’t you supposed to be with your mother and sister?”

Sierra made a face, her tone slightly whiny as she said, “My mom and sister keep lecturing me when we’re together. I just can’t take it anymore.”

“If it’s fine by you, I see no problem. I doubt Aiden and Nina would mind either.”

“Sierra is a sweet girl. Why would I mind?” Nina chuckled. Aiden stayed silent and didn’t object, so Janice took that as his approval. His input seemed less critical here.

Sierra’s eyes sparkled with excitement as she exclaimed, “Great!” Janice blinked, puzzled by Sierra’s excessive enthusiasm. Additionally, the way Sierra gazed at her was peculiar, almost like a fan admiring their favorite celebrity.

Chapter 119:

Wait a minute! Could Sierra be infatuated with her?

Janice looked at Sierra again, noting that her gaze was indeed intense.

“Sierra, are you finishing school this year?” Nina asked unexpectedly.

“Yes, I graduated back in June,” Sierra replied, her face falling as she spoke. “But honestly, I’m not excited about graduating. Once I’m out of college, I won’t be able to do the things I love anymore.”

“It sounds like your mother has already set your path for you. A career-driven woman like her tends to control not only her life but also the lives of her children,” Nina commented, her voice tinged with sympathy as she anticipated the restrictive life awaiting Sierra.

Though Nina was close to Leonie, their views on parenting were starkly different. Nina valued respecting children and believed in never forcing them to do things they didn’t want to, while Leonie, on the other hand, wanted her children to adhere to her plans.

“Nina!” Janice said softly, noticing the unease on Sierra’s face. Realizing her tactlessness, Nina quickly added, “Oh, Sierra, I’m sorry! I shouldn’t have said that.”

Sierra shook her head, resigned. “It’s okay, I’ve come to terms with it.”

Janice frowned. “So, you’re just going to comply and be a puppet?”

“Janice...” Sierra looked at her, almost pleadingly. “What choice do I have but to accept?”

“Sierra, remember this,” Janice said with conviction. “You should live for yourself. Don’t let anyone become the shackles that restrict you.”

“But my parents won’t let me choose my own path. They’re determined to push me down the one they’ve chosen.”

“That’s exactly the problem,” Janice said, tapping the table and looking thoughtfully at the chandelier above, her demeanor that of someone who’d seen it all. Nina and Aiden looked on, taken aback by her assertive stance. Was she turning into Sierra’s life coach?

“Sierra, you’re a kind girl, but that has become your weakness. Because you are too kind and well-mannered, your parents have managed to bind you.”

Confused, Sierra asked, “Then what should I do?”

“Don’t let your kindness prevent you from chasing what you really want,” Janice said, gesturing towards the luminous crystal chandelier as if to draw strength from it, and imparted some heartfelt advice. “Live life on your own terms.”

Sierra trembled slightly, her puzzled eyes beginning to sparkle. She saw Janice as a guardian angel sent to rescue her, offering a ray of hope on her confusing journey.

“Ahem!” Nina couldn’t resist pulling Janice aside and whispering, “Janice, you might be leading Sierra off course with that advice. And definitely don’t say that in front of Leonie; she might start hating you.”

“How could I possibly lead her astray? I’m simply helping her find her path,” Janice replied, a hint of pride in her voice. Nina and Aiden simultaneously rolled their eyes. That was Janice, always bold and unfiltered. They had no choice but to accept it.

“Janice, I know what I need to do now,” Sierra said, her fists clenched, her eyes alight with determination to follow Janice’s advice.

Janice smiled approvingly. “You’re incredible. Keep at it. Aim for a life with no regrets.”

“Yes,” Sierra nodded vigorously. “A life without regrets. Thank you, Janice. Your advice means a lot to me.”

Just then, Aiden teased, “Looks like you’ve got yourself a new admirer.”

Chapter 120:

“What?” Janice was momentarily taken aback. Glancing at Sierra again, she noticed an even more intense admiration in the girl’s eyes.

“Oh no!” It appeared she had truly captured Sierra’s heart.

“Sierra!”

A voice, commanding and resonant, cut through the room.

Sierra’s expression shifted when she spotted Leonie a short distance away. Leonie’s face was an icy mask of disapproval, her brows knitted in clear displeasure.

“Why did you go disturb Nina? Come back here right now.” Leonie’s stern words not only accused Sierra of bothering Nina but also expressed her discontent with Sierra’s abrupt departure. Janice shot Sierra a look, and Sierra returned it, their silent exchange conveying mutual understanding.

“Sierra, you can do it.”

“Yes, I can.”

Taking a deep breath, Sierra suddenly stood up and faced Leonie, her resolve flickering.

“Hmm?” Leonie’s eyebrows furrowed even deeper.

“Maybe next time,” Sierra muttered, her courage faltering as she gave Janice a helpless glance. “Janice, I’ll head back to my mom now.”

“Alright.” Janice sighed, deeply understanding the complexity of Sierra’s upbringing in the controlling Ramirez family. Breaking free from such constraints wasn’t easy. “Remember, sometimes you have to be bold and not worry about what others think.”

“Okay.” Sierra nodded, her determination renewed momentarily before she dashed back to her mother.

Leonie remained seated, her arms crossed and her expression stern, her aura formidable and unyielding.

“Mom...”

“Why did you go to Nina? Is there no place for you to sit here?” Leonie cut off Sierra, her finger tapping impatiently on the table. “Sierra, do you think you’re all grown up and can challenge me now?”

“I didn’t,” Sierra responded, shaking her head vigorously, a sense of injustice washing over her. “I merely wanted to speak with Janice.”

“Janice?” Leonie scoffed, her gaze narrowing as she looked at Janice with a sneer. “An outcast from her own family, and you think she is suitable company for you? Even as Aiden’s wife, she cannot escape the fact that she was rejected by the Edwards family.”

“Mom, that’s too harsh,” Sierra interjected, her voice laced with defense for her friend. “Despite being cast out by the Edwards family, Janice managed to become Aiden’s wife. And she prevailed in facing the Edwards family’s challenges on her own. I find her even more impressive than Nellie.”

“Sierra!” Leonie’s anger flared, her gaze turning frosty as she looked at her daughter. “Are you challenging me?”

Cowed by her mother’s intense glare, Sierra recoiled, finding it impossible to maintain eye contact.

“Janice became Aiden’s wife solely through a prearranged marriage between the Edwards and Green families. The Greens accepted her only to maintain their public image. Do you genuinely believe they welcomed an outcast from the Edwards family with open arms?”

Sierra nervously bit her lip and clenched her fists, though she refrained from pushing the argument any further. She knew that the more she protested, the angrier Leonie would become, and causing a disturbance during the banquet would only serve to embarrass them among the assembled guests.