

Wrath 1201

Chapter 1201:

“By the way, I’ve got some news for you,” Trenton said.

“What is it?”

Trenton slid a tablet across the table towards Janice.

Janice glanced at the screen, her expression shifting instantly. “Lancelot’s under house arrest?”

“That’s right,” Trenton said gravely. “When you went missing, Lancelot’s rival, Wells Marquez, used the chaos to impeach him. Lancelot’s carefree attitude has given people plenty to hold against him, which is why the queen put him under house arrest. Your disappearance has exposed many with questionable motives. If Lancelot hadn’t been confined, JE Consortium might not have encountered such serious trouble.”

As Janice reflected on Lancelot’s past behavior, she realized how problematic it had been. When he was in power, he acted freely.

But once he began to decline, those who eyed his power would undoubtedly seize the opportunity. He would be kicked while he was down.

Janice suspected the situation was far more complicated than Trenton mentioned. There had to be more beneath the surface. After all, how could Lancelot, the queen’s favored son, end up under house arrest?

“Janice, I’ll arrange a bodyguard to accompany you for your upcoming international trip.”

“Mr. Truman...”

Before Janice could decline, a man stepped forward, flashing her a grin. “My name is Samson Payne.”

“Ah, it’s you.” Aiden immediately recognized Samson, Minnie’s uncle, the lieutenant-general who had helped him during his time in prison.

“Aiden, do you know him?” Janice asked, her curiosity piqued.

Aiden nodded and quickly introduced Samson.

When she learned that Samson was Minnie’s uncle and had helped Aiden, Janice immediately expressed her gratitude.

“Aiden is quite the force to be reckoned with,” Samson said heartily. “Despite being besieged by assassins, he remains unscathed. It’s truly impressive. If his ambitions were different, I’d want him in the army.”

“You might recruit him, but I wouldn’t dare,” Trenton chuckled. “I don’t want the army to be traumatized.”

Trenton had seen Aiden’s formidable fighting skills firsthand. In battles, Aiden was like an enraged lion, unstoppable in his fury.

Such a wild spirit would be an asset if harnessed, but a potential disaster if not. Fortunately, Aiden was calmer in Janice’s presence. Without her, however, his rage knew no bounds.

“Sir, isn’t it too much to have General Payne as my bodyguard?” Janice asked, slightly overwhelmed.

Trenton shook his head, his expression grave. “Your upcoming trip isn’t just a personal matter. You’ll be representing our country. Previously, your masked anonymity allowed you freedom, but now, as our public face, there’s more at stake.”

Janice had hesitated to reveal her identity because of the responsibility.

Chapter 1202:

“Actually, I have my selfish motives. Lancelot is your friend. I hope he ascends the throne. It would benefit our diplomatic relations. But if Wells, who is aggressive and hostile, becomes king, we could face difficulties.”

“I understand,” Janice said, feeling the weight of her role. Initially, her goal was merely to solidify cooperation with Aerith’s royal family, but now she saw the broader implications. But she felt compelled to accept.

“Samson is an experienced soldier. Having him as your bodyguard will ensure your safety,” Trenton added.

“Thank you, General Payne,” Janice said, expressing her gratitude.

Samson waved his hand dismissively. “No need for formality. Just call me Samson.”

“Alright.”

Meanwhile, chaos reigned in the Welch family.

Mateo had discovered that their usual allies in higher positions had gone into hiding, refusing to offer help or even acknowledgment.

This abrupt shift could only be attributed to Trenton’s meddling; otherwise, the authorities would never desert them.

“The Welch family is doomed! We can’t face the White family’s onslaught without our usual support.”

“Mateo, we should consider peace talks. If the White family is open to dialogue, we must pursue it whatever the cost.”

“Shut up!” Mateo shouted, his gaze icy as he surveyed the room. “Have you forgotten our feud with the Whites? This is not something that can be mended. It’s either us or them that needs to be removed from the picture.”

“Mateo, I’m willing to give up my shares for free. But I will leave the Welch family and sever all ties with you,” Hughes said, standing resolutely. His announcement stunned everyone.

Then Cason and Randall stood, offering their shares and wishing to cut ties with the Welch family.

Their sudden change of heart was unexpected, especially since they had nearly fought Mateo over these shares.

“Ha, you three are cowards.” Mateo laughed, his voice tinged with madness.

“You’re surrendering significant assets just to ensure your own safety!”

“We don’t have many years left. We just want to spend what’s left in peace.” Hughes sighed. “Maybe Orson was right to choose seclusion, seeing the pointlessness of it all.”

His words enraged Mateo. “Get out! All of you! You’re free to sever ties, but don’t expect to return once the Welch family rises again.”

Hughes, Cason, and Randall shared a look and left the room.

Despite holding greater power than before, Mateo felt no joy, aware that the Welch family was merely a hollow shell on the brink of collapse.

“Gilmore, what are your thoughts?” Mateo turned to Gilmore, who had been silent.

Gilmore, previously distanced from power, now held an ambiguous role as Mateo's strategist, charged with resolving their dilemmas.

Chapter 1203:

Gilmore cast a glance at Mateo, his voice low and stern. "Leonidas has pulled his support. Bart and Delilah are already dancing to his tune. If we want his support, we must prove our worth."

Mateo's jaw tightened, fists curling at his sides. The thought of depending on someone he once dismissed as insignificant scraped at his pride.

"And how exactly do we earn it?" he asked bitterly. "With our current strength, we're in no shape to challenge the White family."

Gilmore leveled him a gaze. "Have you forgotten? Janice is heading abroad for that royal banquet in Aerith. That's our chance."

"You've found someone who can match her?"

"I have." Gilmore gave a slow nod, though weariness hung in his voice like a heavy coat. "They've got a score to settle with Janice. But their strength falls short."

"What?" Mateo's voice spiked in disbelief. "If they can't even rival her, what's the point?"

Gilmore rubbed at his temples, his patience clearly thinning. "I'll handle it. Leave the rest to me. And unless the family's burning, don't knock on my door."

Mateo opened his mouth, but seeing Gilmore's exhausted look, he couldn't bring himself to speak.

Gilmore had sacrificed too much for the Welch family. He had lost an arm and overextended himself beyond the duties of his neutral position. And now the entire Welch family's fate rested on him alone.

With just a single day left before Janice's departure, she made a quiet return to Efrery—to the mist-veiled Mount Cloudridge, where Orson waited.

The old man sat in a wicker chair on the veranda, eyes shut, soaking in the silence like it was the last warmth of a fading sun.

His face was lined and sunken, but peaceful. One might've mistaken him for already gone, if not for the faint rise and fall of his chest.

"Grandpa." Janice approached, her voice soft as a breeze through leaves. Orson raised an eyebrow, then his lids fluttered open. When he saw her, his lips curved into a familiar, gentle smile. "Janice, you finally came."

She sank down beside him, slipping her hand into his. "Grandpa, how do you feel living here?"

"It's peaceful," he murmured, nodding slowly. "The orphanage was great, but I didn't want to be a burden to those kids. Better to fade out quietly, don't you think?"

"Don't say that," Janice whispered, a tightness gripping her chest. His skin felt like paper, and his voice—like it was already partway to the next world. He had moved back to avoid disturbing others, hoping to leave this world quietly.

"Janice, everyone dies eventually. What matters is that we go without regret. I used to be afraid that in the next world, I'd be too ashamed to face your grandmother. But now, watching you and Stephen, safe and sound, gives me the courage to see her again."

"Grandpa, are you really not concerned about the Welch family anymore?" Janice looked up, her gaze searching his.

A quiet sigh slipped from Orson's lips, his eyes dimmed with a sorrow too old to name. "They've brought this upon themselves. They must pay for their sins. There was a time I hoped you'd show them mercy. But now, their fate is no longer my burden to bear."

Chapter 1204:

Then, Orson patted Janice's hand with a smile. "But you, my dear, don't be too hard on yourself. When you were missing, my heart was heavy, but something deep inside me always believed you'd come back safe. You're her granddaughter, after all. She's watching over you."

Janice's heart swelled. She leaned forward and wrapped her arms around him, holding him tight. "Grandpa, wait for me, okay? Aiden and I are getting married soon. You must attend our wedding."

"Alright, my little girl. I'll wait."

They talked for a while longer, the comfort between them like an old song. When Janice finally left, her heart felt lighter.

Outside, Aiden noticed the difference immediately and smiled. "Janice, how's Orson doing?"

She nodded. "He's doing quite well." But then her eyes locked with his, steady and serious. "When we return from abroad—even if the Welch family still exists—I want us to hold our wedding."

Aiden paused, momentarily caught off guard. But then his expression softened and he nodded. "Alright. We'll have a grand wedding. We'll invite everyone we know and celebrate the happiest day of our lives."

The next day, Janice, Aiden, and Samson boarded their international flight to Aerith.

Back in Cloverhill, Costello and Braylen remained behind, both seasoned and formidable in strength. Their task was simple: keep watch over Leonidas. And if he dared make a move, they would be more than ready to handle it.

“Aiden, are you serious about this?” Inside the cabin, Janice looked across at the woman seated opposite her, skepticism in her eyes. “Isn’t she just as skilled as Braylen? Why not have her stay behind instead?”

“I personally trained Sloane overseas. She understands the international terrain better than Braylen does. Having her with us will make things smoother.” Aiden paused, then looked at her with quiet sincerity. “Her main job is to stay close and protect you. Since you’re both women, it’ll be more convenient.”

Janice blinked, momentarily stunned by the thought, but it made perfect sense. “I thought you were going to say you were the best bodyguard I could ask for.”

“Well, it’s not impossible.” Aiden crossed his legs, a mischievous grin playing on his lips as he eyed Janice. “You might just end up addicted.”

Janice was momentarily taken aback, unable to respond right away. But once she regained her composure, her face turned a deep shade of red. “I think having Sloane as my personal bodyguard sounds like a great idea.”

Noticing her embarrassment, Aiden let out a chuckle. “What? Are you turning me down? I’m not just close—I can get even closer.”

“Oh, come on!” Janice rolled her eyes. To her, Aiden was completely hopeless. With Sloane right there, he didn’t seem embarrassed at all.

Aiden had grown more affectionate, teasing her with more confidence than ever before.

Seeing her flustered face, Aiden couldn’t help but find it amusing and reached out to pinch her soft cheek. “Janice, how are you this cute? I didn’t even say anything, and you’ve already imagined the rest.”

Janice threw a punch at him, but Aiden caught her fist in his palm. "Alright, I won't tease you anymore. We still have time before we get there. You should get some rest."

Chapter 1205:

He then shared a look with Sloane, a silent understanding passing between them.

Sloane gave a small nod, signaling that she would look after Janice.

Aiden stood and made his way to the nearby dining area, settling at the table with Samson.

"Aiden, you're here," Samson greeted, as if expecting him. He'd already prepared two glasses, filling them with red wine.

Aiden sat across from him, his face a mask of indifference. "Mr. Truman didn't just send you to protect Janice—you're here to keep an eye on her, aren't you?"

Samson smiled faintly, taking a sip of his wine. "You're sharp—you figured that out quick. But regardless, Janice has a lot of influence. If not managed right, it could become a threat to the country. The real reason I'm here is to make sure the power she has remains secure."

"I get Janice," Aiden said, picking up his glass and gently swirling the wine inside. "She's someone who values loyalty and friendship. For the people she cares about, she'd risk everything. And her family? She'd go to any length to protect them. She wouldn't do anything to hurt the country."

Samson let out a deep sigh. "Aiden, I understand your point, and I trust Janice as someone we can count on. But sometimes, the power someone holds can be so overwhelming that it doesn't always go as planned. Too many outside forces can sway things. Like what happened with Orson back then."

Aiden's brow furrowed as he quickly grasped Samson's worry.

In the past, Orson had controlled the Welch family, making them the most powerful in Cloverhill.

But despite all that power, he had failed to protect the people he cared about.

Aiden finished his wine in one gulp, his voice steady and deep. "I'll stand by Janice, whatever she decides. And for the things she can't do, I'll do them for her. That's my word. You can carry out your duties, but if you ever try to hurt Janice, I won't hesitate."

Samson raised an eyebrow, looking at Aiden with fresh respect.

This was a man willing to face anything for the woman he loved, and it was this kind of madness that kept him unbeatable.

Minnie had good taste in men. Too bad Aiden would never be hers. Samson couldn't help but feel a twinge of regret for his niece. If Minnie and Aiden had met earlier, maybe there could have been something between them. But sadly, there were no 'ifs' in this world.

Meanwhile, Janice, wide awake, observed Sloane with curiosity.

Sloane was stunningly pretty yet deceptively delicate, concealing a dangerous edge. Once it showed, it was deadly—like a dagger that could take lives.

"Sloane?"

"Yes?" Sloane turned, a touch of confusion crossing her beautiful face.

"How did you get to know Aiden?"

Sloane paused, clearly caught off guard by Janice's question. "I met him on the battlefield. Back then, I was just another mercenary, barely hanging on amidst the gunfire. He saved me, gave me shelter, and let me grow into who I am now."

“Do you like him?”

Chapter 1206:

Sloane’s eyes widened, her body tensing up as the question seemed to unsettle her.

“Don’t worry,” Janice said with a soft smile. “Women can read between the lines. No matter how well you try to hide it, your emotions will still show.”

Sloane looked surprised, but after a moment, her expression firmed. “Yes, I like him.”

Janice’s face softened with appreciation, recognizing the sincerity in Sloane’s eyes. Sloane was unafraid to show her true emotions.

“Aiden is truly one of a kind. Any woman who crosses his path finds herself falling for him. Even Minnie, the head of the Payne family, has a soft spot for him.”

“Aren’t you angry?” Sloane’s brow furrowed, her curiosity growing as she studied Janice’s reaction.

“Why would I be angry?” Janice shook her head, her expression unwavering. “I can’t control him, and I can’t control anyone else, so I choose to trust him.”

A glimmer of admiration flickered in Sloane’s gaze. “He made the right choice. You’re the kind of partner anyone would be lucky to have.”

“I’m not sure if I’m a perfect partner, but as long as he doesn’t betray me, I’ll stand by him. I won’t let his efforts go in vain. And by the way, tell me more about Aiden’s time on the battlefield.”

Aiden rarely spoke of his time on the overseas battlefield, likely because it held the darkest chapters of his life—ones he was unwilling to open again.

Sloane nodded, her voice steady as she recounted Aiden’s harrowing experiences on the battlefield.

Janice listened intently, her heart heavy. Aiden's trials were far more brutal than she had ever imagined.

She, too, had trained on the overseas battlefield once, but it had been a straightforward assignment with little peril.

Aiden, however, had spent three long years there, often teetering on the edge of death. If it weren't for Braylen, his comrade who sacrificed so much to protect him, Aiden wouldn't have made it out alive.

"Janice, weren't you asleep?" Aiden returned to find her wide awake, engrossed in conversation with Sloane. His brow furrowed in confusion.

"I'm just getting to know Sloane a little better." She smiled.

A flash of panic swept over Aiden. He glanced at Sloane, wondering if she had shared something unfavorable about him when he wasn't around.

"Mr. Green, if you keep eyeing me like that, Ms. White might get upset," said Sloane.

What did that mean? His look was innocent enough. How could Janice be upset by that?

At that moment, Janice's soft laughter filled the air as she gently pulled him down beside her. "Sloane's actually quite adorable."

"Adorable?" The word sent a shiver down Aiden's spine. Sloane was a deadly force. How could she possibly be described as adorable?

But seeing Janice so at ease, it was clear they hadn't exchanged anything unpleasant, which was a relief.

Chapter 1207:

“Sloane, from now on, skip the formalities—don’t call me Ms. White. Just call me Janice.”

“Alright, Ms. White.”

Janice rolled her eyes in exasperation. It seemed this little habit would be difficult to break.

The flight was uneventful, the journey winding down as the first rays of dawn touched the earth.

As Janice and her companions stepped through the arrival gate, they were greeted by a bustling crowd, eager to give them a lavish welcome.

Nearby travelers, drawn by the spectacle, hastily pulled out their phones, snapping pictures and speculating if a foreign leader had arrived.

Word was out that the queen’s birthday banquet, a major social affair, would take place in two days, with invitations sent to dignitaries and high-society figures. In the past few days, influential figures had come to the country, but never had there been such an extravagant reception.

“Hello there!” A man in a suit greeted them with open arms, a warm smile spreading across his face.
“Welcome, my dear...”

Suddenly, he froze, a sharp gleam flashing in his eyes. “Should I call you Ms. White, JE, MO, or perhaps RAIN?”

Janice narrowed her gaze, her eyes sharp and assessing as she silently sized him up, refusing to answer his question.

The man was striking, tall with a neatly trimmed mustache, exuding an air of sharp intelligence, but beneath that sharpness, there was something more devious lurking.

“Are you Prince Wells?” Janice asked.

“Yes.”

Janice curled her lips into a subtle smile, casting a glance at Aiden before the two of them silently made their way to the lounge.

Samson frowned in confusion, unable to fathom why Janice would ignore Wells. As guests, the lavish reception was a courtesy, yet their behavior seemed less than polite.

Sloane, however, showed no hesitation, following them without a second thought.

Watching them, Wells frowned instantly. “What is the meaning of this?” he demanded.

Janice settled into a seat, her gaze unwavering as she addressed Wells. “Apologies, but it was Lancelot who invited me. Unless he comes to pick me up personally, I’m not going anywhere.”

Wells inhaled deeply, his frustration simmering just below the surface as he fought to stay composed.

Janice remained resolute—she was here for Lancelot, and for no one else.

“Sir, what should we do now?” A subordinate approached, his voice low. “If we can’t convince her, your mother will hold us responsible.”

“I never imagined that useless Lancelot would have such a strong bond with Janice. She’s willing to risk offending me just to stand by him. This is truly beyond my expectations.”

Chapter 1208:

Wells paused, deep in thought, before turning away. “Leave Janice alone. I’m curious to see how long she’ll stand her ground.”

He had successfully confined Lancelot and was resolute in keeping him there. Moreover, he didn't believe Janice would keep challenging him for Lancelot's sake.

"What's happening here? Why did the royal entourage leave without picking up a single person?"

"Such disrespect! Not even acknowledging Prince Wells. Who is this person?"

"I know! That's RAIN, the musician who performed at the royal banquet before. No wonder all this drama!"

The crowd quickly recognized Janice, knowing her as the queen's favored musician. Yet, they couldn't understand why Janice would reject Wells' warm reception. Was there tension between them?

Those who grasped the gravity of the situation stayed silent, watching intently. This was no mere exchange—it was a battle for the throne, a silent, unseen war unfolding.

"Janice, are we just going to stay here?" Aiden asked, his brow furrowed in curiosity. "Wells doesn't strike me as someone who gives in easily."

"He will," Janice said with unwavering confidence, a faint smile tugging at her lips. "No matter how strong he is, the queen stands above him, and that's something he can't challenge."

With that, she casually grabbed her phone, snapped a selfie, and uploaded it to her social media.

Thanks to her fame and her many aliases, even a simple selfie quickly went viral across social media.

Wells made his way back to the palace, seeking out Lancelot.

Lancelot appeared disheveled, his eyes blazing with fury. Upon seeing Wells, he hissed, “You bastard, let me out!”

“Oh, dear brother, don’t get so worked up,” Wells replied with a calm smile. “It was our mother who decided to lock you away.”

“If it weren’t for your meddling, she wouldn’t have locked me up.” Lancelot gritted his teeth in frustration. “You’re after the throne, aren’t you? I can give it to you, but you have to release Eleanor.”

“Tsk!” Wells shook a finger at him. “Do I look like the kind of man who’d claw his way to the throne at any cost? No, no, I’m quite the benevolent brother. You’re begging me to take the throne, aren’t you?”

Lancelot’s pupils narrowed as he grabbed Wells by the collar. “You pervert! You’re revolting.”

“I fail to grasp your point,” Wells remarked, leisurely pouring himself a glass of wine from the nearby cabinet. “But there’s one thing I can confirm—your friend RAIN has arrived.”

“What did you say?” Lancelot stood frozen for a brief moment, shock flooding his features, before a rush of excitement swept over him.

If RAIN could sway his mother’s heart, perhaps his freedom would be restored.

“Don’t let your hopes soar too high,” Wells said, taking a slow sip from his wine glass, his eyes glinting with mockery. “Your friend is playing it bold—refusing to come back with me and choosing to stay at the airport. If our mother hears of this defiance, do you really think she’ll let it slide?”

Chapter 1209:

“Wells, you did this on purpose!” Lancelot lunged at Wells once more, but this time Wells kicked him back, a sneer curling on his lips.

“Exactly, I did it on purpose,” Wells crouched down, his sneer sharp and cruel. “I went out of my way to welcome her, but she insisted on you doing it instead.”

Lancelot's heart stirred at the words. Janice must have understood his predicament, which explained why she had insisted on him being the one to greet her.

But now Wells was intentionally leaving her stranded at the airport, planning to escalate the situation before their mother.

No matter how much their mother favored RAIN, such an insult to royal dignity would not be easily excused.

"Lancelot, beg me." Wells stood tall, towering over him with a cruel smile. "If you kneel and beg, perhaps I'll show mercy and spare RAIN."

Lancelot clenched his jaw, the taste of humiliation burning in his chest. But the thought of Janice suffering under Wells' wrath—or worse, their mother's—caused his knees to buckle slightly in spite of himself.

At that moment, footsteps echoed in the hall.

Wells scowled and turned to see Ploss O'Brien hastening toward them. Ploss was the queen's right-hand man, entrusted with delivering messages and handling royal affairs. Why was he here now, though?

"Gentlemen, your mother requests your presence."

"Mother desires to see us?" Wells frowned, his gaze flicking to Lancelot beside him. "Are you certain it's us she wants?"

"Yes, indeed! She has summoned both of you."

“But Lancelot is confined at the moment. Wouldn’t it be improper for him to leave?” Wells said, his smile strained.

But Ploss’ face hardened, his voice taking on a sharper edge. “Are you challenging the queen’s decision?”

“No, no, no, how could I possibly dare?” Wells chuckled nervously. He would only show a more humble demeanor in front of the queen and her right-hand man. “Since it’s Mother’s request, then Lancelot, let’s go.”

Before long, the two of them found themselves standing before Elizabeth. Elizabeth, regal and commanding, was draped in haute couture, exuding an air of unparalleled grace.

“Mother, what do you require of us?”

Elizabeth gave Wells a cold, penetrating look before speaking. “RAIN has already arrived. Why wasn’t I made aware?”

“What? RAIN has arrived?” Wells pretended that he had no idea. “I didn’t hear a thing! Had I known, I would have been the first to welcome her.”

“You didn’t know?” Elizabeth sneered. “Then explain this.” She casually tossed a tablet toward Wells.

His eyes flicked to the screen, his gaze sharpening with fury. Janice wasn’t merely making a statement—she was ready to confront him head-on.

Initially, he had planned to keep her waiting as a show of dominance, to remind her of the royal family’s power. But instead, Janice had turned the tables, posting a selfie at the airport.

Chapter 1210:

On top of that, she had left a biting remark, lamenting her unceremonious arrival in Aerith, hinting that perhaps the royal family was too preoccupied to acknowledge her as a guest, all while nostalgically recalling Lancelot’s past generosity.

“Mother, I’ll go and pick her up now,” Wells offered.

“No need,” Elizabeth replied coolly, her eyes briefly flicking to Lancelot. “This time, let Lancelot take on the responsibility of welcoming RAIN.”

“But Lancelot is still confined. How can he possibly...”

“Huh?” Elizabeth’s piercing gaze immediately sent a chill through Wells, unsettling him.

Elizabeth, the queen who held the reins of Aerith’s royal family with unwavering command, wielded an authority so absolute that no one dared challenge it, regardless of her age.

“Thank you, Mother,” Lancelot quickly said, his voice steady with resolve. “I will ensure RAIN is properly welcomed and make the royal family proud.”

“Very well. Consider this your chance to make amends,” Elizabeth said, taking a slow sip of her coffee. “Now go.”

Lancelot wasted no time, hurrying to leave.

Wells watched Lancelot depart, his eyes narrowing with cold calculation. He hadn’t anticipated Janice would leverage public sentiment to secure Lancelot’s release.

Janice and her group had been waiting for over an hour, their patience wearing thin, when the royal entourage finally returned.

This time, the reception was even more magnificent, with the royal honor guard at its finest, exuding a sense of power and grandeur.

Observing the spectacle, Janice offered a faint smile. "Let's go."

Before long, Janice spotted Lancelot. He seemed more fatigued than before, but his smile remained as radiant as ever.

"Ah, RAIN, our paths cross once more," Lancelot exclaimed, opening his arms in greeting, prepared to embrace Janice.

But before he could reach Janice, Aiden moved between them, leaving Lancelot to hug the empty air. In an attempt to smooth over the awkwardness, Lancelot ended up hugging Aiden.

"Aiden, long time no see." Lancelot chuckled, attempting to mask his discomfort. "You're still as frosty as ever."

"And you're still as shameless as always," Aiden retorted with a mocking laugh, unflinching in his mockery. "Try hugging my woman again, and next time, my fists won't be so polite."

Lancelot quickly turned to Janice, silently pleading for assistance.

"Let's head to the car first," Janice suggested, glancing around at the watching eyes. "This isn't the place for a conversation."

"Of course, this way, please," Lancelot quickly agreed, gesturing toward the car.

As soon as the car door slammed shut, Lancelot's playful demeanor dissolved, his eyes turning serious as he looked at Janice. "RAIN, thank you. Without you, I'd still be locked away."