

Wrath 1241

Chapter 1241:

“Olynn?” Elizabeth paused, the name stirring a flicker of recognition. “Did you once take part in a piano competition and face off against RAIN?”

“Yes!” Olynn pulled off her mask, unveiling a striking visage. Her long, golden waves and sharp brown eyes radiated elegance and unwavering confidence. “Last time, I lost to RAIN. I won’t get the chance to face her again today, but since her student just earned your praise, I suspect she’s not too far behind.”

Olynn cast a glance at Liliana. “If I beat her, it’s as good as beating RAIN herself.”

Liliana smiled. “You’ve mastered the art of self-consolation. But we’re all growing, Olynn. What makes you think Janice isn’t improving too?”

Olynn’s gaze cooled. “Enough with the chatter. Let’s get started.”

A fresh piano was wheeled onto the stage, and the two women took their seats, poised to begin.

The crowd buzzed with excitement, fully aware that they were witnessing a rare and elite piano duel, a spectacle none of them had ever anticipated. And it was all made possible by the grand occasion of the queen’s birthday.

“I’ll serve as the judge.” At that moment, Nolan stepped forward.

The audience nodded in approval—no one else present had the credentials to preside over such a high-caliber contest.

“Thank you, Nolan.” Elizabeth smiled warmly. “Let’s catch up after the banquet.”

“Of course, Your Majesty.” Nolan offered a courteous nod before shifting his focus to Liliana and Olynn. “You’re both titans in the world of music, so I’m sure you know the rules of a piano duel. Play freely. The first to throw off the other’s rhythm wins.”

Liliana gave a small nod, signaling her understanding.

Olynn leaned forward, her eyes blazing with determination. “Let’s begin.”

Nolan gave a slight smile and gestured toward them. “Begin your performance.”

A powerful note rang out, echoing through the hall.

It was Olynn—she launched into a flurry of notes, building an intense, soaring melody that demanded attention.

The audience felt transported to a battlefield, where war cries rang out and the air reeked of smoke and fire.

They were stunned. Olynn, who had once trailed behind RAIN and even Nolan, was now capable of bringing music to life and presenting an epic scene.

Nolan frowned, sensing something was off about Olynn. Just a year ago, she had fallen short of RAIN. Could she really have climbed so high in such a short time?

Her playing had taken on a wild, ferocious edge, turning the music into the very sound of war itself.

In truth, Olynn had chosen this ferocious piece deliberately—to overwhelm Liliana with sheer force.

“This isn’t good,” Nolan muttered under his breath, casting a concerned glance at Liliana.

Lancelot, Nina, and Aiden shared uneasy expressions. They might not grasp the technical rules, but even they could tell—Olynn’s performance was pushing Liliana into a corner.

Chapter 1242:

How could Liliana possibly turn the tide in such a bleak situation? Then, Liliana inhaled slowly and lifted her hands. Her ten graceful fingers hovered before striking the keys with purpose.

Bang. Bang. Bang!

Three piercing notes sliced through Olynn’s melody, like arrows whistling through a war-torn sky.

Olynn frowned, her fingers quickly adjusting the melody. In an instant, the tide of battle seemed to shift, as ranks of shield-bearers rose to deflect the arrows raining down upon them.

But Liliana wasn’t finished. Her gaze sharpened, and a storm of agile notes flowed from her fingers, shifting and weaving like unpredictable tactics.

The audience watched in stunned silence, mesmerized.

In their minds, a battlefield emerged—waves of soldiers storming from every direction. Infantry surged forward, cavalry thundered across the field, and distant artillery roared—intent on shattering Olynn’s crumbling defense.

“Unbelievable! This is unreal!”

The crowd was left in awe by Liliana’s performance. They had expected her to be eclipsed by Olynn’s grandeur, yet in the face of Olynn’s majestic melody, she boldly launched a surprise counterattack, catching Olynn completely off guard.

Olynn’s fingers raced, dominating the keys, determined not to give Liliana a single gap.

Her furious, chaotic melody surged—the keys a whirlwind. But even at that pace, Liliana matched her beat for beat, slipping her notes seamlessly between Olynn's.

The musical battlefield spiraled into absolute chaos.

The audience could almost feel the thunder of clashing armies, the ground quaking under the weight of destruction.

“What the hell is happening?” Wells frowned, unease settling in. Just moments ago, he had been smug, convinced Olynn would surely win.

Nothing in the current moment resembled the scenario Wells had envisioned. If this continued, Liliana might very well seize victory from Olynn's grasp.

“Leonidas, didn't you claim Olynn was certain to win?” Wells demanded.

Leonidas took another sip from his drink, his composure unshaken. “Relax. This is only the opening act. The true spectacle is still ahead.”

Wells raised an eyebrow, his unease fading as he sensed Leonidas' unshakable confidence. “We're in this together. If I fall, you'll share in the consequences.”

Leonidas smirked, though his thoughts were focused elsewhere. He was wondering what Janice was waiting for. Why hadn't she made an appearance yet? He believed she wasn't going to fall so easily.

The piano rang with the sharp clanging of notes.

The frantic notes tangled together, weaving a haunting melody. A shiver ran down every spine in the room, bodies trembling with unease. Was this even still a piano duel?

It had evolved into something far darker—more like a war than a mere performance.

Gradually, Liliana had taken command of the rhythm, guiding Olynn into her own melody.

Chapter 1243:

The crowd watched in awe, their certainty growing that Liliana was destined to win this duel.

But then, Olynn's eyes blazed with determination, and her playing shifted from passive to intense. She was now outplaying Liliana with sheer force.

Liliana's face tightened in disbelief. How was Olynn speeding up so much? Was this even within human limits?

Olynn appeared almost enchanted, her fingers blurring as she conjured a magical storm, turning the musical battlefield into a dreamlike frenzy. It was as if a horde of monsters had been unleashed, their fury aimed directly at Liliana's domain.

Another sharp clang rang out.

Liliana stopped.

Her hands shook, struggling to match the blistering pace set by Olynn. Olynn gradually ceased her playing, her lips curling into a smug, mocking smile. "I've won."

Liliana's brow furrowed, her hands trembling as they clenched into fists.

"What exactly did you just do?" she asked, her eyes narrowing in suspicion at Olynn's sudden shift. "I thought my speed was already at the human limit. No one, except Janice, should be able to match it. But the speed you displayed just now—it was unnatural, beyond what any human could possibly do."

Olynn laughed mockingly. "Just because you can't manage it doesn't mean others can't. If you're bad, practice harder."

“You...”

“Mr. Fletcher, can you announce the outcome now?” Olynn turned her gaze to Nolan.

Nolan stared at Olynn, disbelief written all over his face.

Despite his doubt that any human could play at such a speed, Olynn had done it.

“I hereby declare Olynn the winner.”

“Ha-ha.” Wells erupted into laughter. “Lancelot, did you see that? This is the so-called top musician you brought to perform for our mother? How could you present someone with such pitiful skills?”

“Wells, what are you implying? X’s performance was already approved by Mother. Losing the duel doesn’t change that!”

“No!” Wells shook his head, glaring at Lancelot with intensity. “This only proves you’re not as capable as I am. My judgment is far superior, and frankly, I question whether your intellect is enough to guide Aerith toward a better future.”

“Exactly! Prince Lancelot is constantly wasting time. He even went to Veland chasing after PMAIN. It’s utterly embarrassing.”

“Prince Lancelot is unfit to be heir to the throne. I believe Prince Wells should be the one to take on that role.”

The crowd began to murmur, applying pressure on the queen.

Wells narrowed his eyes, sensing that everything was falling into place. “Your Majesty, we implore you to carefully consider the heir to the throne, for the future of Aerith.” A minister suddenly addressed Elizabeth.

Chapter 1244:

“I second that. With Prince Lancelot’s judgment and temperament, he’s clearly not fit to be heir to the throne.”

“Please, Your Majesty, consider the choice of heir with utmost care.”

Elizabeth regarded the ministers with a stern expression, though inwardly, she felt drained.

Her worst fear had come to pass. Ignoring the opinions of her people was not something a true leader should ever do.

“Sorry for being late.”

Just then, a voice interrupted as Elizabeth began to speak.

Everyone turned toward the sound in surprise. The newcomer was none other than Janice.

Aiden’s eyes gleamed, his heart finally at ease. Janice had not failed them—she had arrived just in time.

“Guards, seize this fugitive at once!” Wells’ expression darkened, and he quickly ordered the guards to capture Janice.

“Stop right there!” Lancelot commanded, aware of the impending threat. As the guards began to advance, he quickly ordered his own to protect Janice.

For a tense moment, both sides stood at a standoff, uncertain of what would unfold next.

“Lancelot, have you lost your mind? Sheltering a fugitive isn’t just reckless—it’s a crime that carries weight.”

Wells’ eyes burned with lethal rage, but deep down, his heart hummed with twisted delight. It was the perfect storm—two birds, one stone—and there was no way he’d let this chance slip through his fingers.

“The investigation isn’t over. Why are you in such a rush to condemn RAIN? What are you really after?”

Lancelot held his stance like a fortress, placing himself between Janice and danger. The air crackled with tension—one spark, and everything could explode.

Janice observed Lancelot’s stance, a knowing smile forming at the corner of her lips. Then, out of the blue, she asked, “Lancelot, have you finally decided?”

Lancelot hesitated for a heartbeat, then gave Janice a solemn nod. “Yes. I can’t let down the ones who love me—or the ones I love. Protecting them is my duty. And I’m willing to fight for them.”

As Lancelot’s words settled in the air, Janice smiled, her eyes gleaming with quiet satisfaction.

“Lancelot, you’re far stronger than I gave you credit for. No wonder your mother is so set on you inheriting the crown.”

Janice turned her gaze to Elizabeth, who met it with a calm, unreadable look.

A faint, enigmatic smile passed between the two women—silent, yet loaded with meaning.

“Mother, RAIN is right in front of you. Please—give the order to arrest her,” Wells pressed on, his voice tight. “Even if she’s merely a suspect, her presence here stains the royal name. And Lancelot siding with her? It’s suspicious. Please, Mother, investigate this properly.”

Elizabeth rose gracefully and stepped forward. “RAIN must have her reasons for being here. Let her speak. We owe her the chance to explain what happened with Morpheus.”

Chapter 1245:

Wells’ face stiffened, blindsided by the queen’s unexpected reply.

The crowd looked at one another, a hush falling over them. With the queen’s voice clear and commanding, none dared to challenge Janice further—they’d only seem unjust.

“Thank you, Your Majesty, for your grace and fairness.” Janice gave a respectful bow. “I’ve come only to reveal the truth about Morpheus’ untimely death.”

Wells’ face twitched, and his eyes locked on Janice—wide, unsettled, and laced with panic.

How could Janice, a fugitive dancing on the edge of danger, possibly find time to investigate Morpheus’ death? Or was this just a bold bluff? He cast a glance at Leonidas, who was buzzing with an eerie thrill, those wicked eyes locked on Janice, calm and unfazed.

What was this lunatic even staring at? Could Janice’s arrival really excite him that much?

Janice’s eyes landed on Leonidas too. She strolled over with deliberate steps. “Before I dive into Morpheus’ death, I need a word with an old friend.”

“Janice, I knew you’d show up.” Leonidas jumped to his feet, arms flung open, his gaze burning brighter. “Now the real fun begins.”

Janice’s eyes narrowed sharply. Her fist coiled tight—then she hurled it straight at Leonidas.

The punch came out of nowhere. Leonidas was still grinning when her fist crashed into his face.

A heavy thud cracked through the air.

Leonidas stumbled backward, reeling from the impact.

“Leonidas, your time’s up.” Janice’s voice was like ice, her face shadowed. “You’re not walking out of here today.”

Blood trickled from Leonidas’ mouth, yet his crazed eyes gleamed. “Yes! That’s the fire! Janice, come on—give me the thrill. End me right here.”

Janice inhaled deeply, the urge to finish him off blazing in her eyes.

But this was Elizabeth’s birthday banquet, and she was already under suspicion. Killing Leonidas here would mean defying royal dignity—even if she later proved her innocence in Morpheus’ case.

“Just wait. I’ll make you wish you were never born.” Janice turned toward Elizabeth, offering a wry apology. “Forgive me—my old friend has an odd craving for my fists.”

Elizabeth gave a soft chuckle, entirely unshaken. “Then shall we begin, RAIN?”

Janice nodded briskly and snapped her fingers. A woman stepped through the doorway.

The entire room froze in shock—the woman was none other than Farrah, Morpheus’ daughter.

Wells felt his chest clench as Farrah appeared, his face turning grim. “RAIN, what’s the meaning of this? Did you drag Farrah here just to prove your innocence?”

“What’s got you so jumpy?” Janice sneered. “I haven’t said a word, yet you’re in such a rush to speak for Farrah. But she’s not here to clear up Morpheus’ death.”

With that, Janice cast a meaningful glance at Farrah.

Chapter 1246:

Farrah approached Elizabeth, her steps measured and graceful. She bowed deeply, a gesture of utmost respect. "Your Majesty, I must set the record straight—I was never held captive by RAIN. Instead, she saved me."

Her declaration rippled through the assembled crowd.

Whispers and murmurs swelled among the onlookers. The prevailing rumor had painted a starkly different picture. Janice had allegedly kidnapped Farrah to manipulate Morpheus into obedience, paving the way for Lancelot's ascent. Morpheus' subsequent refusal to bow to such coercion had reportedly cost him his life.

But now, Farrah's confession shattered that tale like glass, leaving confusion and disbelief hanging in the air.

"Are you certain of this?" Elizabeth's voice cut through the murmurs, sharp and clear.

"Without a doubt," Farrah replied, her tone unwavering. A shadow of grief flickered in her eyes. "Though RAIN's methods seemed rude, her intention was to protect me. I never imagined that someone would go so far as to murder my father over this."

She paused, her gaze hardening as she turned to face Wells, her eyes blazing with fury.

"Farrah, you're spouting nonsense," Wells interjected with a sneer, his disdain palpable. "You say you weren't held captive, yet who's to say you aren't being forced to speak these words now?"

A ripple of murmurs stirred through the crowd. For a moment, Wells' accusation actually made sense.

If Janice was indeed attempting to clear her name, manipulating Farrah into defending her would be a cunning move.

Facing Wells squarely, Farrah's voice rose, filled with fierce resolve. "I swear on my father's sacred honor, everything I've said is the truth."

"Bullshit! Such words mean little!" Wells scoffed, shaking his head vehemently. "A person under duress might swear anything to preserve their life."

"You..."

Farrah's fists clenched, her breath hitching in frustration. The nerve of Wells was beyond infuriating.

Before she could snap back, Janice gently placed a hand on her arm, her cool, steady gaze quieting the storm in Farrah's chest.

"Prince Wells, you do make a valid point," she noted with a graceful nod, her lips curving into a disarming smile. "Words alone don't prove anything. But what if..."

"Someone caught it all on video?"

"A video?" Wells echoed, his expression tightening with suspicion.

With a dramatic flourish, Janice clapped her hands, and instantly, the room's focus shifted to the large screen that flickered to life.

"This is the hotel's surveillance footage," Janice announced as she gestured toward the screen. "What you're looking at is the very room where Farrah was staying."

On the screen, the video showed two men suddenly lunging out of the shadows. They took down the guards posted outside with swift, brutal efficiency, then stormed into the room.

Chapter 1247:

Moments later, the footage captured Janice, Aiden, and Sloane rushing into the room after hearing the commotion.

Although the interior of the room wasn't captured, the sequence left little room for doubt—two men had come to abduct Farrah, and Janice and Aiden had acted quickly to stop it.

Then came the most telling clip: a man bolting from the hallway with Farrah slung over his shoulder, while Janice and Sloane raced after him. The footage cut out suddenly.

"As you've just seen, Farrah was kidnapped. And we were right behind the guy, doing everything we could to stop him. Farrah is standing here unharmed today because Aiden and I got there in time."

Janice turned to Wells, her tone sharpening. "Prince Wells, are you really going to stand there and claim this was orchestrated? Let me remind you, Farrah is now in the presence of nearly the entire royal family of Aerith. Her father is gone. Tell me, who could possibly be left with the power to coerce her now?"

Wells opened his mouth, but no words came. His complexion paled, and his jaw tensed as his hands slowly curled into tight fists. He stayed silent, cornered by the weight of her logic.

With a knowing smile playing at the corners of her mouth, Janice leaned slightly forward, her voice smooth yet edged with palpable sharpness. "Prince Wells, I do value your skepticism. Is there anything else you'd like to ask?"

Wells let out a derisive snort but didn't say a word, his jaw clenched in growing frustration.

"If there are no more questions, then it's time I uncover the truth about Morpheus's death," Janice declared, her gaze hardening into a frosty glare that seemed to slice through the thick air, striking Wells with cold dread.

Could she really have unearthed something? He thought he had covered his tracks flawlessly.

Suddenly, the room was filled with the flicker of another video playing. There on the screen was Morpheus, and chillingly, beside him stood Wells himself.

“How the hell is this possible?” Wells gasped, his eyes bulging as the scene unfolded before him. “Why do you have this video?”

“Perhaps a better question would be why this video still exists,” Janice sneered, the mockery in her tone clear and biting.

Wells shifted uncomfortably, his mind racing. He had been sure that he had deleted all evidence of the surveillance footage. Yet here it was, playing before an audience.

He couldn’t help but glance at Leonidas, who gave him nothing but a dismissive look.

“Prince Wells, there’s one more truth I think you should hear,” Janice went on, her voice steady and commanding, her calm poise a stark contrast to the growing unease around her. “Apart from being known as JE and RAIN, I go by another name too—Queen.”

A collective gasp filled the room. The name “Queen” was synonymous with cyber legend—a figure shrouded in mystery and revered in the digital underworld as the pinnacle of hacking prowess, unmatched and unparalleled.

“When it comes to digging lost data out of digital graves, no one does it better than me,” Janice said proudly.

Chapter 1248:

“You’re Queen?” Wells gasped in disbelief. Why had Leonidas kept this from him?

“Caught off guard? Didn’t expect that, huh?” Janice’s sweet smile bloomed, and just like magic, it soothed Aiden, Nina, and Lancelot, like sunlight chasing away the storm.

Whenever Janice wore that smile, it was like a silent signal—the storm had passed, and calm had returned.

“Morpheus, has RAIN taken Farrah with her?”

Wells’ voice rang out crisply from the video feed, every person in the room hearing it with chilling clarity.

“How did you find out?” Morpheus paled, panic etched across his face. “If I hadn’t found out on my own, were you planning to hide it from me forever?”

Wells sneered, his voice low and venomous. “You’re my most trusted man. I’ve bared every secret to you, yet you keep secrets from me.”

“I never meant to...”

“Morpheus, how far would you be willing to go for me?”

By now, the atmosphere in the room had thickened—the tension hung heavy, almost suffocating.

Farrah’s eyes brimmed with dread, her stare distant—like someone watching the shadow of tragedy creep closer.

“Shut it off! Right now!” Wells exploded, desperate to end the video. But one piercing glance from Elizabeth cut through his fury, freezing not just him—but the entire room—into silence.

Wells sank into silent despair, the weight of inevitability pressing down on him.

He already knew what horrors the next frames would unveil—his past was about to betray him.

In that instant, regret clawed at his chest. If only someone else had pulled the trigger, maybe there'd be a sliver of escape.

"I swear, I've always been loyal. Please, you have to believe me," Morpheus begged, his voice shaking. "RAIN promised she'd release Farrah after the birthday banquet. Until then, I won't do anything."

Wells slowly shook his head, a chilling gleam flickering in his eyes. "And that's exactly the problem—you're doing nothing."

He gave Morpheus a gentle pat on the shoulder and let out a slow sigh. "Maybe it's better this way. Once you're gone, I can lay it all on RAIN. Her taking Farrah becomes the perfect motive. Morpheus, your death is the final piece in my masterpiece."

"No..."

Before the words could escape him, Wells drove a dagger straight into Morpheus' chest.

Watching the video, Farrah crumbled. Her heart shattered as tears spilled freely down her cheeks.

But it was only a recording. The murder had already played out, irreversible. The helplessness crushed her, leaving her drowning in despair.

"Why? I've been loyal..." Morpheus gasped, blood bubbling at his lips. He clung to Wells' arm, eyes pleading, overflowing with confusion and betrayal.

Chapter 1249:

"Why? Because you're more valuable to me when you're dead. Oh—and your wife? That was me too." Wells sneered, lips curling.

Morpheus' eyes flared with fury, his face twisted in anguish as his hands clamped onto Wells, veins popping with rage. "I'll kill you!"

But Morpheus never got the chance. Wells twisted the blade with cruel precision, sealing his fate. "If I hadn't killed your wife, how else could I have made you work for me?"

Farrah sat frozen, her face ghostly pale, as if her very soul had been ripped from her body.

So this was the truth behind it all.

Years ago, Wells had murdered Morpheus' wife just to gain his loyalty—and then paraded his guilt with a grand funeral, using it as leverage. And now, in the name of ambition, he had struck down Morpheus himself.

"You sick monster!" Farrah shot to her feet and lunged at Wells. "My father was gentle and good! Why did you break him? You even murdered my mother just to twist him into your pawn! You're a demon in human skin!"

The crowd recoiled, their eyes filled with fear—especially those who had once backed Wells. Morpheus' brutal end was a grim reminder that loyalty meant nothing to him.

Who could say they wouldn't be next—just pawns to be discarded for his ambition?

"Get out of my way!" Wells shoved Farrah aside, his eyes dark with fury as he locked onto Janice. "Everything I planned so carefully—you destroyed it! Who are you really? How could you pull all this off while on the run?"

"Alone, I couldn't have," Janice answered calmly, her eyes shifting to Elizabeth. "Wells, you see your mother as someone who avoids conflict, who preaches peace only because it suits her royal image. But that is the strength of a true ruler. Your ambition will lead to nothing but ruin. That's why you're not fit to be king."

“Mother?” Wells turned to Elizabeth, disbelief clouding his face. “So that’s why you weren’t concerned when RAIN was declared wanted. You were behind it all.”

“Wells, my son, please stop this before you fall too far,” Elizabeth said with a weary sigh. “Otherwise, there is no turning back.”

With a chilling cackle, Wells erupted into wild laughter. “Stop? Never! I’ve crossed the point of no return!”

Elizabeth, her brow creased with concern, shook her head in resignation. “Since you remain so obstinate, then...”

“Guards!” Wells bellowed abruptly, his voice echoing through the hall.

“Apprehend my mother! Today, she will relinquish the throne to me!”

In a heartbeat, the hall was encircled by armed guards. The guests, gripped by fear, scurried for cover, but the overwhelming presence of guards left no sanctuary.

“Mother, you’ve driven me to this,” Wells declared, his countenance shadowed, his eyes alight with unhinged fervor, his sanity utterly unraveled. “My initial desire was merely to persuade the council to compel you to name me crown prince. Yet I never foresaw events spiraling to this juncture. You’ve driven me to this reckless course.”

Chapter 1250:

Elizabeth regarded Wells with serene composure, her regal poise calming the trembling assembly.

“Wells, this is high treason,” Lancelot warned, his voice laced with urgency. “You’re severing all paths to redemption.”

“Silence!” Wells snapped, his glare venomous as he turned to Lancelot. “You idle wretch! Always stirring trouble. You think you’re fit for the crown? If not for you, I wouldn’t have resorted to this! All I seek is to elevate Aerith to its zenith, to resurrect the empire’s lost splendor. Is that such a crime?”

In a sudden move, Wells seized Eleanor, his gaze dripping with malice as he taunted Lancelot. “Dear brother, you ought to be kneeling before me.”

“Eleanor!” Lancelot’s heart plummeted. He lunged forward, only to see Wells tighten his hold on Eleanor’s throat.

“Aren’t you enamored with RAIN? Why this concern for Eleanor?”

Wells sneered, his warped delight evident as he licked his lips. “Shall I offer you a choice?”

With a flick of his wrist, he cast a dagger to the floor.

“Take it,” Wells said with a malevolent smirk. “Kill RAIN, or I end Eleanor.”

Lancelot’s eyes widened in horror, his heart torn. He could not bring himself to harm either woman, yet Wells had struck at his deepest vulnerability.

“Choose, or they both perish!” Wells growled, his grip on Eleanor’s neck tightening with fury.

Lancelot’s gaze darkened as he raised the dagger to his own throat. “I choose my own end!”

Wells froze, stunned, his eyes locked on Lancelot in disbelief. This response was beyond his calculations.

But in that moment, Eleanor sank her teeth into Wells’ hand. The searing pain forced him to release her.

"You wretch!" Wells roared, lunging for her again, but Aiden stepped in, shielding Eleanor and delivering a mighty kick that sent Wells sprawling.

A collective gasp filled the air.

Wells coughed up blood, his eyes burning with escalating madness and malice. "You'll all meet your doom! Guards, slaughter them all!" Yet the guards stood resolute, unmoving.

"What is this? Defying me?" Wells cried, panic seizing him. "You serve me!"

"No longer," declared the guard captain, stepping forward with icy resolve. "We were merely playing along with you. Our loyalty lies solely with the queen."

The guests' expressions softened with relief upon hearing that.

Simultaneously, they couldn't help but admire Elizabeth's shrewdness. Though always poised and gracious, she had masterfully orchestrated every detail. It was as if Wells' every scheme had been an open book to her.

"Wells, you are defeated," Elizabeth declared with icy composure. "From the moment you surrendered to your reckless ambition, your downfall was inevitable. Perhaps now you see why I choose Lancelot over you."

Wells' laughter rang out, laced with deranged bitterness.

Of course, he understood. It was all for the sake of the people, even at the expense of personal gain.