

Wrath 151

Chapter 151:

“Why are you here, anyway?” Janice asked, crossing her arms. “Shouldn’t a young lady like you still be lounging in bed at this hour?”

“Janice, are you calling me a lazy pig?” Sierra replied, sounding a bit offended.

Janice raised an eyebrow, amused that Sierra had picked up on her sly remark.

“Actually, I came here for work,” Sierra added.

“Work?” Janice asked, gesturing toward the building nearby. “You mean at Delgado Jewelry?”

“Yes!” Sierra’s face broke into a triumphant grin. “It’s my first day at work today, so I’m counting on you to guide me.”

Janice couldn’t help but roll her eyes, her tone tinged with amusement. “It’s actually only my second day here. Maybe you should be the one keeping an eye out for me. Considering you’re a Ramirez, I’d expect people here to show you some respect.”

“No, I’d rather stick with you. You’ll have to watch out for me.”

“Huh?” Janice looked at her with a mix of surprise and skepticism. “Are you serious?”

“Of course!” Sierra nodded earnestly.

Janice sighed, a hand on her forehead as she pondered the unexpected complexity Sierra brought into her day. “Why even go through all this? You could be living comfortably as a wealthy heiress instead of working here. Are you just looking for a change of pace?”

"I'm not just killing time," Sierra responded, her tone serious. "I'm here to learn from you. You're incredibly skilled, and I believe I can gain a lot by working closely with you."

Janice was momentarily stunned.

Sierra's assertion struck a chord of truth.

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Given her extensive knowledge and skills, many would eagerly leap at the chance to be her teacher. Yet, the real puzzle lay in discerning whether Sierra was genuinely naive or merely putting on an act. If Sierra was indeed naive, her choice to learn from Janice made sense. If not, she had abandoned a life of luxury for a reason not yet clear.

"Janice, please take me under your wing," Sierra implored, looping her arm through Janice's and giving her best pout. "Please, pretty please?"

A headache began to form behind Janice's eyes. Sierra's behavior reminded her painfully of Leah, whose similar antics she had always struggled to manage.

"Whether I mentor you isn't solely my decision," Janice sighed, feeling trapped. "It's actually up to the company's plans."

That didn't deter Sierra; her eyes sparkled with mischief as she laughed. "That's already sorted. I've talked to Kenneth, and he's agreed to assign me as your assistant."

Janice's lips twitched in resignation. Sierra had come well-prepared, evidently having orchestrated everything, just awaiting her nod.

Left with no other option, Janice ushered Sierra into the Delgado Jewelry building.

Sierra, brimming with enthusiasm, still vividly recalled how Janice had boldly confronted Leonie the previous night.

That moment had left a lasting impression, igniting a spark in Sierra. She resolved to turn from the compliant girl her family had always dictated, aspiring instead to emulate Janice's strength and assertiveness.

As they reached the 13th floor, Janice stepped out of the elevator and sensed something was wrong.

Chapter 152:

The colleagues who had greeted her warmly just the day before now cast glances filled with disdain and resentment.

"What happened? I was only away for half a day, and it feels like the whole office atmosphere has changed." Shaking her head, Janice tried to dismiss the unsettling change, not letting it dampen her spirit.

"Janice, I'm heading to the HR department to finish my onboarding process. I'll catch up with you afterward," Sierra said.

"Okay."

After watching Sierra stride confidently toward HR, Janice turned to make her way to her desk.

However, before she could settle in, Delilah appeared, effectively blocking her path.

"Delilah, what's on your agenda today?" Janice inquired, sensing that the cold shoulders from her colleagues might be connected to Delilah's recent activities.

She could feel the frustration building; it was barely morning, and she had already encountered enough duplicity to last through the day.

“Janice, why did you do that?” Delilah asked, her voice carrying a tone of aggrieved innocence as she put on a pitiful expression.

Janice’s scornful laughter echoed through the room. “Really, Delilah? If you’re going to point fingers, at least come prepared with some grounds for it. You just came and asked me what I did. I have no idea what you’re talking about. But if it’s about why I can’t stand you, that I can explain. It’s simply because you’re a bitch.”

“That’s uncalled for, Janice!” Cheryl stood up, her eyes burning with fury. “Do you always treat others like this?”

With a smirk, Janice turned to Cheryl. “Now, Cheryl, I’m intrigued. Why the sudden hostility this morning? Did Delilah spin some stories about me to you? Perhaps she painted herself as a victim of my cruelty, and you all rallied to her cause in sympathy, am I right?”

Cheryl and the others were visibly stunned. Their eyes met in silent agreement, recognizing the truth in Janice’s biting words.

Delilah felt her heart race and quickly interjected, “Janice, Carman poured his heart into his work. Why would you convince Aiden to blacklist him?”

Janice saw right through this. Yesterday’s events had demolished Carman’s career as Vernon canceled his endorsements, turning him from a star to a mockery overnight — a severe hit to his prospects. Though Janice was uncertain of Vernon’s exact actions afterward, it was clear Delilah was now exploiting Carman’s downfall to garner sympathy and mobilize their colleagues against her.

“I’ve always supported Carman, playing his songs over and over. I see a bright future for him. Yet here you are, wielding your influential connections selfishly to blacklist him. Your actions are despicable,” said a female colleague, her anger evident.

“I might not be a fan, but Carman’s music resonates with vitality. He’s a true original. Such a shame he’s related to you. Having been disowned by the Edwards family, why do you continue to hurt others?” another male colleague added fiercely.

Verbal assaults from her colleagues washed over Janice, who maintained an aloof demeanor, her smirk unwavering.

“Look, Janice, I’m ready to face any fallout from my actions. If you hold a grudge, let it be against me, but please leave Carman out of it. I regret questioning the authenticity of your necklace last night. Yet, I’m convinced that Carman, as the most celebrated...”

“Original singer, wouldn’t hand me a counterfeit item. Regardless, with Aiden’s clout in Efrery, the Blue Heart he gifted you must be genuine.”

Chapter 153:

Janice’s eyebrow arched, silently acknowledging Delilah’s sharp tongue. Delilah had skillfully deflected any responsibility, ensuring that if there were any doubts about the authenticity of her necklace, the blame would fall squarely on Carman.

In the same breath, Delilah painted Aiden as a bully. Her suggestion, subtle but pointed, hinted that should Aiden distribute a counterfeit item, his power alone could legitimize it.

Empathy began to swell among their colleagues, who voiced their support for both Delilah and Carman. “Carman has always been upfront with his fans. Is it even plausible that he’d distribute a counterfeit?” one colleague remarked.

“With the Green family’s influence, any fake can be paraded as legitimate. That’s the extent of their power,” another added.

“The Edwards family has had to come to terms with this harsh truth. What chance would we stand as ordinary people?” As more colleagues gravitated toward Delilah, they unknowingly played right into her manipulative plot.

Fueled by perceived injustices imposed by the elite, they rallied against Janice with growing fervor. Once Janice found herself ostracized by the majority, her professional abilities hardly mattered in the face of collective opposition.

Achieving this isolation was precisely what Delilah had intended.

“What are you all talking about?” Sierra demanded, arriving just after completing her onboarding to find her colleagues confronting Janice.

She quickly sized up the situation and exclaimed, “Are you planning to lay a hand on Janice?”

With resolve, Sierra positioned herself firmly by Janice’s side. “I don’t care about the earlier events, but if anyone dares to harm Janice, I won’t stand idly by.”

Janice, somewhat taken aback by Sierra’s fervent stance, admired her genuine loyalty. Without fully understanding the dynamics at play, Sierra had decisively chosen to support her, which made her appreciate the seemingly naive young woman even more. However, when Delilah saw Sierra, her face clouded over. Why was Sierra here, and why was she defending Janice?

“Miss Ramirez, why are you here? Are you looking for Mr. Delgado?” Delilah forced a smile.

Sierra studied Delilah with a discerning eye before asking pointedly, “Are you the adopted daughter of the Edwards family?” The directness of the question caused Delilah’s heart to sink, though she maintained her composure, replying with a forced smile, “Yes, I am. And though I’m adopted, my parents and brothers treat me exceptionally well—perhaps even better than Janice.”

This thinly veiled slight was intended for Janice, suggesting that even an adopted girl received more affection than she did. However, Sierra, uninterested in such subtleties, responded sharply, “A fake will always be a fake. It can never compare to the real thing.”

“Miss, don’t you think your words are rather harsh?” Cheryl interjected, unable to contain her indignation any longer as she came to Delilah’s defense. “What do you mean by ‘fake’ and ‘real’? Aren’t you aware that the one who is less favored is the most pitiful?”

“Is being favored by the Edwards family really such a prestigious honor? Is it more prestigious than being favored by the Green family?” Sierra was unyielding in her rebuttals, leaving Cheryl at a loss for words.

As employees of Delgado Jewelry, they were well-versed in the hierarchy of the elite families. In all of Efrery, who could possibly outshine the Greens in terms of prestige? Being favored by the Green family was a true mark of distinction.

Undeterred, Sierra pressed on. "Moreover, if the Edwards family really favored the adopted, why haven't they taken a stronger stand against the Green family? Oh, that's right, the Edwards family only rose to prominence as the Patterson family fell from grace. Compared to the Green family, they're simply not in the same league."

Chapter 154:

Upon hearing this bold declaration, Janice couldn't help but burst into laughter.

She hadn't anticipated that the seemingly timid girl from the previous evening would reveal such a bold side. It appeared that stepping away from the constraints of the Ramirez family had allowed Sierra to fully embrace and express her true self.

"Janice, your smile is beautiful," Sierra remarked, turning back to appreciate Janice's radiant smile following their spirited exchange, leaving the onlookers around them utterly astonished.

Janice walked over and patted Sierra's head affectionately. "Sierra, why are you so endearing? Look, you've got them so riled up that their faces have turned blue. What if they demand compensation for emotional distress?"

Sierra squinted playfully at the disgruntled crowd and chuckled. "Then let them simmer in their own anger."

“Don’t think you can get away with anything just because you’re young! Delgado Jewelry is no place for your antics,” a male colleague interjected, standing up with a sense of bravado that earned him admiring glances from some of the female staff. Puffed up by his bold declaration, he fancied himself their hero. “Leave here immediately,” he bellowed. “Or I’ll call security.”

After issuing his ultimatum, he paused, expecting a wave of supportive glances. Instead, he was met with a sea of frightened faces, his attempt at heroism not receiving the reception he had envisioned.

“Why is everyone staring at me like that?” The man’s question was met with startled glances instead of praise, leaving him uneasy.

“Didn’t Delilah just call her Miss Ramirez?” someone whispered. Another asked, “Miss Ramirez? You mean she’s from that Ramirez family?”

A coworker added, “Oh no, Chris is in big trouble now.” Chris Payne, the man who had asked security to drive Sierra out, turned pale as his coworkers’ whispers reached his ears.

“You’re a Ramirez? Seriously?” Chris stared at Sierra, disbelief etched across his widened eyes. “But that’s impossible! Why would a Ramirez be here at Delgado Jewelry?”

Everyone knew the Ramirez family was a big deal, running massive enterprises that kept them more than busy. It seemed unthinkable for someone like Sierra Ramirez to show up at a place like Delgado Jewelry.

“There’s got to be some mistake,” Chris muttered, clinging to denial.

“There’s no mistake!” Sierra stepped forward confidently, her chin held high. Her sharp voice crushed the last shred of Chris’s denial. “I am Sierra Ramirez. So, are you planning to call security and throw me out, or what?”

The others shook their heads quickly. There was no way any of them would even think about it. The Ramirez family was even more powerful than the Edwards family. Who would dare to cross them?

Noticing their reaction, Sierra gave a satisfied nod and smiled. “Well then, I have an important announcement to make. Starting today, Janice...”

Her words stunned everyone instantly. Could Sierra be announcing that she would take Janice under her protection? With Sierra backing Janice, they would need to tread carefully around her.

They had only picked on Janice earlier because she had been cast out by the Edwards family, and Delilah was there to support them. That was the only reason they felt bold enough to gang up on her. But now...

“Janice is my best friend,” Sierra declared. “Starting today, I’ll be her assistant.”

The others were completely stunned.

What did she just say?

Chapter 155:

They had all assumed Sierra was going to support Janice, but becoming her assistant? That was beyond anything they expected.

“Miss Ramirez, do you realize what this means?” Delilah asked, unable to hold back. “Janice only just joined Delgado Jewelry, and she’s not even a full-time employee yet. How could she possibly have an assistant assigned to her? Besides, both of us are already Stella’s assistants.”

Sierra gave Delilah a disdainful glance and said, “Kenneth told me himself. If you have an issue, take it up with him!”

At the mention of Kenneth, Delilah’s expression soured. She had been doing everything she could to win Kenneth over, but he always treated her with indifference. All her efforts felt pointless and embarrassing.

Now, hearing Sierra refer to Kenneth so fondly while flaunting his influence to assert her authority, how could Delilah not feel a surge of anger and envy?

Delilah felt like she was on the verge of exploding with rage.

Her glare locked onto Janice, who stood there with her arms folded, clearly amused by the unfolding drama and paying no attention to Delilah’s fury.

Did being bullied and isolated by her colleagues not bother her at all? Could she already have a plan up her sleeve? Or was Sierra her secret weapon all along?

“What’s going on here?” At that moment, Kenneth entered the room.

He wore a navy blue suit, his hair flawlessly styled. He looked polished and refreshed, radiating an air of authority.

In no time, all the single women in the room were captivated. After all, who wouldn’t be drawn to such a charming and wealthy man?

Sadly, they could only admire him from a distance. The chasm between their worlds was simply too wide to cross.

“Kenneth.” Sierra walked towards him with a sweet smile. The moment Kenneth saw her, his previously furrowed brows relaxed. Although he had no interest in Nellie, Sierra’s endearing qualities were undeniable. It was her authentic simplicity and guilelessness that seemed to put him at ease.

“Are you already embroiled in conflicts with your colleagues on your very first day?” Kenneth’s penetrating gaze swept across the room, compelling everyone but Janice to look away. Even when meeting his eyes, Janice maintained her composure and even offered a friendly smile.

“I didn’t instigate anything,” Sierra quickly responded, seeking to clarify the situation. She gestured toward Delilah, whose expression was marked by visible irritation, and continued, “Delilah was part of a group that was bullying Janice. I felt compelled to intervene. And then...”

The word “then” sent a ripple of tension through the room. Chris, who had almost managed to sit down unnoticed, shivered violently.

“And then...” Sierra’s gaze locked onto him, leaving Chris exposed and without refuge. “He called security to have me thrown out.”

Janice couldn’t help but chuckle at the unfolding drama. She found Sierra quite interesting.

Sierra had flawlessly mimicked Delilah’s typical behavior, yet her demeanor remained so genuine and unforced that it drew a measure of sympathy from Kenneth. Consequently, his incisive gaze turned to Chris.

“Mr. Delgado, this is surely a misunderstanding,” Chris said quickly, his voice tinged with urgency. “I wasn’t aware of Miss Ramirez’s true identity at the time, so...”

“You didn’t know her identity? So, if it had been someone less significant, you would have had her thrown out?” Kenneth’s voice was icy as he addressed the room. “Chris, I’ve recently joined Delgado Jewelry and am still getting my bearings. Yet, I can already see that there is significant discord in the design department. What do you think I should do about this?”

Chapter 156:

“Mr. Delgado, I was wrong!” Chris, in a desperate bid for leniency, hurried over and knelt, apologizing to Sierra. “I really didn’t mean it earlier. Miss Ramirez, I apologize. Please, ask Mr. Delgado not to fire me.”

The once assertive Chris now seemed utterly pitiful, his plight silencing the surrounding colleagues.

They had previously been unified in their censure of Janice, but now, faced with the threat to their own positions, they dispersed like birds scattered by a storm.

Moreover, Janice hadn’t even spoken yet. If she chose to report them, they could all face serious repercussions. Realizing this, the group quickly redirected their blame towards Delilah. If Delilah hadn’t incited them to ostracize Janice this morning, none of this would have happened. Though they admired Carman, they recognized that defending him did nothing to secure their livelihoods.

Clarity dawned on them, and their glances towards Delilah were tinged with deep resentment. She could feel the intensity of their accusatory stares, her agitation mounting by the second. Initially, they had all targeted Janice, but somehow, the tables had turned, leaving her as the focal point of everyone’s disdain. Janice just stood silently to the side, her demeanor calm and unchallenging. She did nothing to defend herself, instead allowing Sierra to complain to Kenneth. The situation then turned in her favor.

“Chris Payne, you’re fired! Go to HR and settle your affairs immediately,” Kenneth announced, his voice devoid of any compassion as he sealed Chris’ fate.

Then, his stern gaze swept over the assembled employees. “I expect everyone here to contribute positively to Delgado Jewelry, not waste time on gossip and undermining each other!”

The room fell silent, everyone too intimidated to utter a sound.

“Kenneth...Mr. Delgado,” Delilah began, initially addressing him by his first name before quickly correcting herself upon noticing Sierra’s stern gaze. “This is all my fault. I admit I failed to manage the relationships among my colleagues properly. I offer a sincere apology on their behalf.”

Then, with a respectful bow, Delilah conveyed her heartfelt apology to Kenneth.

“You owe Janice an apology,” Kenneth said, nodding toward Janice, who had been quietly watching the scene unfold. Despite the tense atmosphere, Janice’s confident demeanor suggested she could have easily handled the situation on her own. Kenneth and Sierra’s intervention had merely spared her the effort.

Delilah bit her lip, feeling reluctant, but she bowed to Janice nonetheless. “I’m sorry. It was wrong of me to bring personal issues into the workplace. Our colleagues were only trying to support me. I’ll accept full responsibility for any fallout.”

Janice raised an eyebrow, finding the apology somewhat vague. On one hand, Delilah appeared to assure Kenneth that her actions were not deliberately aimed at anyone, just a personal matter gone awry. On the other hand, by accepting the blame, Delilah sought to alleviate any hard feelings her colleagues might harbor against her.

“Since your apology seems genuine, I have no reason not to forgive you. However, a simple ‘sorry’ isn’t quite enough. How about this? Make it up to everyone by treating us to lunch at Forest Shrimp today.”

With this gesture, Janice significantly enhanced her standing among her colleagues. Her proposal not only showcased her generosity but also confirmed to everyone that she harbored no ill will towards their earlier criticism. Additionally, she managed to turn the situation into a win for the team.

Suddenly, those who had been critical of Janice began showing signs of regret.

Chapter 157:

“Janice, I owe you an apology. I was too harsh earlier. Please don’t take it to heart.”

“I do appreciate Carman, but letting my personal feelings affect my professionalism and saying hurtful things was wrong.” One after another, many colleagues started apologizing to Janice. Each apology struck Delilah like a dagger to the heart.

Her attempts to turn the colleagues against Janice had only served to enhance Janice’s reputation further. Forest Shrimp! Having already treated everyone at Forest Shrimp just yesterday, Delilah was

dismayed at the thought of doing it all over again. Although she wasn't struggling financially, the idea of spending more money on these colleagues was frustrating.

"Delilah, since I'm familiar with Forest Shrimp, I can book the Diamond VIP room for you," Sierra suggested with a laugh, seemingly excited to assist.

Delilah forced a tight-lipped smile. Booking the Diamond VIP room meant a minimum expenditure of a hundred thousand. She wondered if these people were really worth that kind of money. Yet, she responded, "No need. I just took everyone there yesterday."

"How can that be?" Sierra furrowed her brows, her expression turning serious. "If you don't experience the Diamond VIP room at Forest Shrimp, you'll miss out on some exclusive menu items only available there. Plus, having already visited once, why not explore different dishes? You're the heiress of the Edwards family; wealth isn't an issue for you. Surely, a little extravagance won't make you hesitate, right?"

As Sierra finished her pitch, Delilah could feel the weight of her colleagues' expectant stares.

"Of course, I wouldn't mind. It was indeed my fault this time. To properly convey my apologies, I'll ask Miss Ramirez to reserve the Diamond VIP room," Delilah conceded, albeit with reluctance.

Sierra's eyes lit up with glee, and she quickly leaned toward Janice, whispering excitedly, "Janice, did I do the right thing?" Janice's lips curled into a smile, and she gave Sierra a thumbs up. "Absolutely! I think you've earned yourself a title."

"Huh? What title?" Sierra asked, a look of innocence on her face.

"Manipulator Exposer!"

Sierra couldn't suppress a chuckle. "Janice, what kind of title is that? But really, I've gotten pretty good at handling manipulators. Back in college, I was constantly surrounded by them, always engaging in mind games and playing the victim. It was incredibly tiresome."

As she recounted her experiences, her face grew somber, and she gave Janice a sympathetic look.

“What kind of look is that?” Janice quipped, rolling her eyes playfully. “They didn’t really affect me, did they?”

“Janice...” Sierra took Janice’s hand. “It must have been difficult dealing with the Edwards family. I know all too well the pain of being wronged and plotted against by manipulators.”

Janice paused, letting the words sink in before offering a warm, reassuring smile. “It’s all in the past.”

Though Janice appeared composed, Sierra, having endured similar ordeals, could sense the veiled distress beneath her calm facade.

Even when Janice was blameless, the mere act of a manipulator shedding tears and claiming innocence was enough to turn the crowd against her. People would instinctively side with the perceived victim, casting Janice in the role of the villain.

No amount of explanation or evidence on her part could sway their judgment. Once the manipulator was seen as the aggrieved party, Janice was invariably painted as the villain.

Chapter 158:

“What’s on your mind?” Janice teased, flicking Sierra’s forehead with a playful gesture, her smile warm. “I haven’t even said anything, but you’re already looking so worried.”

“Ouch, Janice, that stings.” Sierra grimaced slightly, her expression one of mild complaint.

With a shrug, Janice tousled Sierra’s hair affectionately. “Mr. Delgado just sent me to Stella’s office. Why don’t you mingle with our colleagues?”

“Alright,” Sierra responded, nodding with enthusiasm. Internally, she resolved to forge a closer bond with Janice, hoping to ease the pain inflicted by her family’s coldness.

With determination in her eyes, Sierra turned to Delilah, who was also heading to Stella's office. "To help Janice vent her anger, I'll make sure you face the repercussions this time. You escape Forest Shrimp without paying a steep price," she muttered under her breath.

Inside her office, Stella scrutinized draft documents, her knitted brows reflecting her displeasure. At that moment, there was a knock.

"Enter!" Stella called out, her focus remaining on the papers before her.

"Stella, are you caught up with the collaboration with Freak Design?"

At the sound, Stella set aside the drafts and looked up to see Kenneth, alongside Janice and Delilah.

"Mr. Delgado, did you come to check on our progress?" Stella asked, a half-smile playing on her lips. "With the substantial perks Freak Design has provided, it would be embarrassing not to excel."

Kenneth settled into a chair, his legs crossed and hands poised confidently on his knees, embodying a commanding presence. "Considering this is the inaugural project between Freak Design and Delgado Jewelry, why the sudden increase in benefits?"

"I'm at a loss as well." Stella massaged her temples. "Leah Sugden tends to make snap decisions based on impulse. It's possible this was just one of those moments."

Kenneth remained quiet, pondering the complexity of the situation.

Was Leah's impulsiveness the real reason, or was there more at play here? He suspected some catalyst behind Leah's sudden decision.

Janice watched Kenneth, impressed by his sharp instincts, a trait fitting for the heir of the Delgado family.

Little did he know, the influencer behind Leah's decision was in the room with them.

“Let’s hear about your progress,” Kenneth addressed Janice and Delilah. “Despite being newcomers, your talents are crucial for our future projects. I’m counting on you to deliver results that will impress Freak Design and enhance our brand’s stature.”

“Mr. Delgado, I’ve developed a concept,” Delilah chimed in eagerly. “I plan to show the initial draft to Stella tomorrow.”

Both Kenneth and Stella looked at her, visibly surprised. “Are you certain you can deliver it by tomorrow?”

“Yes!” Delilah’s smile was full of confidence, though it faded as she continued, “I admit, my last presentation didn’t go well, and I felt quite embarrassed. My personal issues were distracting me creatively. Now, I’ve found my focus again, and I believe you’ll find the results satisfactory.”

As Delilah explained, both Kenneth and Stella subtly turned their gaze to Janice.

Chapter 159:

The issues within Delilah’s family were well-known, particularly after Janice was expelled from the Edwards family. The fallout from the charity gala only added to the scandal.

“What’s your progress, Janice?” Kenneth inquired.

“To be honest, I’m still brainstorming,” Janice replied with a shrug. “These last few days, my focus hasn’t been on the design draft, as you might’ve gathered from earlier discussions.” Her gaze briefly met Delilah’s, a silent message passing between them.

Kenneth’s expression clouded slightly. He understood the strain Janice was under due to her family’s rejection, which somewhat excused her self-focused demeanor.

“Despite everything, I commit to delivering the design within two days,” Janice added.

“Alright.” Kenneth nodded. He was about to continue when Janice interjected, “I’ll need this afternoon off, by the way.”

Stella’s brow furrowed in displeasure. “Janice, while I recognize your talent, you’re fairly new here. Requesting time off so soon—do you not take your role here seriously?”

“Stella, it’s truly urgent,” Janice responded with a resigned sigh, maintaining her stance. “Rest assured, the draft will be ready on time.”

“You—”

“Stella,” Kenneth raised his hand, interrupting her. “Let her take the leave.”

“Isn’t that a bit too accommodating?” Stella expressed her concern. “Setting such a precedent might lead others to expect similar leniency.”

“That’s not a concern. If they match Janice’s caliber, they’re welcome to flexible work arrangements as well.”

Janice raised an eyebrow and smiled at Kenneth. “You’re quite the progressive leader.”

“Keep me impressed with your upcoming design,” Kenneth replied with a supportive smile. “I have high expectations.”

“Absolutely!” Janice assured him confidently, her demeanor suggesting she was ready to present her work at any moment.

Observing Kenneth’s commendable conduct, Janice wondered if a man of his integrity could have been connected to the murky circumstances surrounding Aiden’s accident years earlier.

At the break room, Sierra was brewing coffee. The strong aroma filled the room, energizing anyone who smelled it.

She felt someone walk in and glanced back to find Delilah standing at the door. Sierra rolled her eyes and kept making her coffee, ignoring Delilah.

"Can I call you Sierra?" Delilah asked with a warm smile, trying to be friendly.

"Stick to Miss Ramirez. Only people I know well get to call me Sierra," Sierra said coldly, making Delilah feel embarrassed.

Still, she wasn't ready to back down, despite Sierra's cold attitude. "Miss Ramirez, is there some kind of misunderstanding between us? If I've done something to upset you, I'm sorry."

"Hold it right there!" Sierra said with a sharp frown, shooting a glance at Delilah. "There's no misunderstanding. I just don't like you. So do me a favor and keep your distance. Spending too much time around you might be bad for my stress levels."

Chapter 160:

Delilah froze, caught off guard. She had thought Janice was tough to deal with, but Sierra's bluntness and open disdain took it to another level.

Delilah pressed her lips together, her eyes shimmering with unshed tears, her voice heavy with grievance. "Miss Ramirez, you seem to have a deep misunderstanding of me. Honestly, the situation with my sister isn't what I wanted. I truly want to get along with her, but ever since she came back, she's been targeting me and making me look bad. Our parents and brothers don't agree with how she behaves, which is why they're sometimes a bit hard on her." She wiped her face as if brushing away tears. "Maybe if I walk away from this family, they will finally find some peace."

"Then just leave," Sierra said with a smirk. "If you really care, go ahead and walk away from the Edwards family. Isn't resolving things with Janice what you want? Now's your chance."

Delilah was stunned. She tried to play the victim, putting on a sad show to seem as hurt as possible, but Sierra didn't care one bit and flat-out told her to stay away from the Edwards family.

Most people might have felt sorry for her, believing Janice was being too harsh, but Sierra saw it completely differently. “Delilah, cut the act. I’ve dealt with plenty of manipulative people back in school, and some of them were way better at it than you,” Sierra said with a scoff as she grabbed her coffee. “You might want to drop that pathetic facade and stop shoving it in my face.”

She grabbed her coffee and walked out, leaving behind one final comment. “You’re still way too naive.”

Delilah’s face twisted in anger as her knuckles turned white from gripping the cup too tightly. It was the first time someone had exposed her so bluntly.

Luckily, no one else was in the break room, or it would’ve been really embarrassing for her.

“Looks like I can’t get Sierra on my side,” she muttered, narrowing her eyes as she considered her next move. Her thoughts were interrupted by her phone buzzing with a message.

Delilah’s eyes flicked to her phone, her eyebrows lifting as a sly smile spread across her face. “Janice, you might have Sierra on your side, but I have someone much stronger supporting me.”

Sierra stepped out of the break room, happily carrying coffee over to Janice. “Here’s your coffee, Janice.”

Janice gave Sierra an amused look. “Are you really acting as an assistant now?”

“I’m serious about being an assistant,” Sierra responded earnestly. “Honestly, I’d be thrilled to be yours.”

Janice accepted Sierra’s coffee and took a sip. “This is actually quite good—smooth and fragrant. I’m surprised you’re so good at making coffee.”

Sierra’s face lit up with a broad smile. “Well, in college, coffee was my lifeline during those all-nighters. I guess I’ve gotten pretty good at it. By the way, I bumped into Delilah in the break room just now.”

A smirk briefly crossed Janice's face as she raised an eyebrow, but she remained silent.

"Want to take a guess at what she told me?" Sierra continued, leaning in closer.

Janice, still focused on her computer, replied, "She was probably complaining about the same old problems, trying to get sympathy and cause trouble between us."

"You nailed it, Janice!" Sierra exclaimed, genuinely taken aback.

"It's not about nailing it; it's that Delilah is predictably limited in her schemes," Janice responded with a weary sigh. "So, did she sway you at all?"