

Wrath 221

Chapter 221:

The elegant woman in white was Leah, the CEO of Freak Design. The disheveled man wearing glasses turned out to be a shadowy tech wizard.

While Braylen could not pinpoint the man's exact area of expertise, he suspected him to be Lanny, one of the world's foremost hackers.

The other man, more daunting and seasoned, commanded a reputation that even Braylen respected.

Aiden exhaled a sigh. "Who exactly are you, Janice?" Despite their relationship being merely a marriage of convenience, he found himself overly fixated on her. But what did her true identity have to do with him after all? His phone buzzed with a new message.

Tess asked, "Mr. Green, do you have any plans tomorrow evening? How about having dinner together?"

With a final glance at Janice's performance, Aiden responded with a brief, "Okay."

As the performance ended, a hush fell over the room.

The spell of the music lingered; everyone was still enveloped in the atmosphere Janice had created.

The applause only began when Nolan started clapping, bringing everyone back to the present and bursting into vigorous applause for Janice.

"Wow! Janice, you're incredibly talented!" Sierra said with excitement, completely dazzled by Janice. "Your spontaneous performance of 'Reborn' was fantastic, and now you've created yet another remarkable piece!"

Vernon's eyes turned a bit red and his lips quivered. Without uttering a word, his admiration for Janice soared to new heights.

The piano piece was performed marvelously!

He shot a piercing look at an assistant nearby, his intense gaze silently questioning whether the performance had been captured on film. He had plans to cherish and study it later.

He also planned to send a copy of the recording to Leah. No doubt, Leah would commend him for his thoughtfulness when she saw the video.

The assistant, quick-witted as always, gave a nod to confirm that Janice's performance had indeed been captured.

"Carman, do you acknowledge your defeat?" Nolan walked over, his face showing no emotion as he addressed the disheartened man.

"No." Carman looked up sharply, his eyes burning with defiance at Janice. "The piece you just played wasn't made up on the spot. You had memorized it earlier, hadn't you? That must be the case. You came prepared this time, just to throw me off. Janice, you're truly merciless. In retaliation, you orchestrated such a complex scheme against me. But getting expelled from the Edwards family was a consequence of your own actions. We chose not to take further action, which was already showing mercy. And now you aim to completely destroy me?"

Janice raised her hand to silence Sierra, who was about to hurl insults, and met Carman's gaze with serenity. "Can't you admit that you're a failure?"

She raised her hand and pressed a key on the piano. "Fine. Then watch closely and recognize the vast gap between us."

With that, Janice's fingers danced rapidly over the keys, releasing a flurry of notes.

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In that moment, Janice seemed to channel deeper spirits, her melody a complex tapestry of joy, anger, and sadness—each emotion resonating so profoundly that it seemed to tug at the heartstrings of the audience.

“If she memorized this, it would be astonishing.”

“Such wild, entrancing music! I’ve never heard anything like it before. It must be an improvised piece.”

“The scariest part is how the music seems to echo her present feelings. It’s a genuine display of raw emotion through music. I can’t imagine any other possibility than that it was created spontaneously.”

Several musicians voiced their support first, relying on their expertise to vouch for the authenticity of Janice’s impromptu performance.

As Carman absorbed the complex melody and witnessed the scene, he felt a deep connection with Janice’s emotions, leaving him completely taken aback.

Memories flashed before his eyes, replaying like scenes from a film.

Was he really a failure?

“Carman, are you actually going to study music?” It was Laurie’s voice.

Carman, deep in thought, flashed back to when he first told his mother about his dream.

“Yes, Mom. I’m going to be a musician,” he declared, his eyes shining with resolve. “I want to reach the heights of RAIN, the music star, and be just as awesome.”

Laurie gave him a soft look, her smile calm but tinged with concern. “But you lack natural talent in music. Aren’t you worried about the challenges?”

He didn't have much talent in music? Carman's heart sank. Did his mother really believe that?

Doubts swirled in his head as memories flooded in. He wanted to shut them out, but they kept coming.

"Mom, I'm not scared of the hard work. Even if I'm not naturally gifted, I think hard work can get me to RAIN's level," he insisted, clinging to his dream.

"Good boy. As long as you're committed, you have my support."

Fueled by passion, Carman immersed himself in music. Every day, he listened to countless songs to deepen his understanding.

He expanded his music library and even convinced his mother to get him a tutor for the basics and various instruments. Yet, his talent still didn't quite shine. After a year, his progress was unremarkable.

During that year, he learned to play the piano, but his skills remained average. He studied composition, but his pieces were far from impressive. Despite this, he refused to give up and decided to make his first public debut as a musician.

His journey in music was a tough one, filled with setbacks and disappointments.

As a freelance online musician, no agency took interest. Though the Edwards family had the resources to boost his career, Carman wanted to succeed on his own terms, without relying on family connections.

He was determined to chase his dreams and match his idol, all through his own efforts.

Then one day, Janice returned, sparking new hope in his journey.

"Carman, you can play the piano? That's incredible!" Janice exclaimed, her smile beaming. She then sat down at the piano and effortlessly played a few notes. "I've..."

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“Picked up a bit of piano too. Why don’t I play something and you can tell me what you think?”

“Playing piano isn’t simple. What could you know, growing up in an orphanage?”

However, as soon as Janice started playing, Carman was taken aback.

Her playing was not just good—it was exceptional. The melody flowed smoothly, her technique was impeccable, and her transitions were fluid.

Carman felt like it had to be an illusion.

He had spent so much time learning piano, yet he was only average. How could someone raised in an orphanage be so talented?

“How was it, Carman?” Janice asked with a bright smile, as though looking for his approval.

“Just average,” he responded, trying to hide his surprise, but he didn’t dare to look her in the eye.

“Absolutely! I only know a little bit, nowhere near your level, Carman. Maybe I could learn from you sometime?” Janice asked, her smile genuine.

Her words, meant as a compliment, left Carman feeling uneasy. Was she being sincere, or was there a hint of mockery in her tone? And she wanted to learn piano from him? How ridiculous! Janice hadn’t grown up with the family and might have developed a sharp, perhaps unpleasant, edge.

Delilah was different—always supportive and straightforward.

But that piece Janice played earlier... Suddenly, inspiration struck Carman. The song he had been struggling to compose finally had a direction.

That day, he completed his first hit song.

It didn't take long for the song to explode online, catching the eye of Starshine Entertainment. Yvonne, their rep, reached out with a promising offer: to turn him into the next big original singer.

Carman really didn't like Janice around. But why did she always come to his room when he was stuck on a new song? An interruption? Was it really an interruption?

Why did it seem that every time she "disturbed" him, he suddenly got a burst of inspiration and ended up churning out hit after hit?

Suddenly, a void opened in Carman's heart, exposing truths he didn't want to face. Every hit song he had ever composed was plagiarized from Janice.

It was only after hearing her play that he found inspiration— inspiration to copy her work.

As the privileged second son of the Edwards family, blessed with every advantage, he couldn't bear the thought of being outshone by someone who had grown up in an orphanage. He had been lying to himself the whole time.

Carman emitted a hollow laugh, a sound tinged with bitterness. It dawned on him that he had been living a lie; he was the true plagiarist after all.

"Have you completely lost your senses?" Sierra's brow furrowed in disapproval, her voice thick with reproach. "Face it, you're beaten. Make your apology. And you too!"

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Her gaze turned to Yvonne, her voice edged with irritation. "You should be saying sorry as well. You accused Janice of plagiarism, but she's cleared her name. Are you seriously acting like it never happened?"

Color drained from Yvonne's face as she cast a bewildered look at Carman, pondering the depths of his folly. At a time like this, he had the nerve to laugh—it was both foolish and ill-timed.

“Carman, are you not going to defend yourself?” Yvonne’s voice was sharp, her eyes narrowing as she made a resolute decision internally. “Our company has lavished you with resources, and now it turns out you’re a plagiarist?”

With a deliberate pause, she turned to the crowd and declared with formal poise, “Ladies and gentlemen, please be informed that Starshine Entertainment was entirely oblivious to Carman’s actions. Effective immediately, we sever all ties with him.”

Carman, suddenly jerked back to reality by her words, stared at Yvonne, his expression a mix of confusion and disbelief. “You’re casting me aside?”

Yvonne, her posture rigid and her expression unyielding, replied icily, “Your contract explicitly stated that any breach would lead to immediate termination. Furthermore, be prepared. We will seek damages for your actions.”

After she had finished speaking, she inclined her head in a deep, respectful bow to the gathered audience. “I want to offer a heartfelt apology for the scandal that has emanated from our company, casting a shadow over the community. Allow me to extend our most profound regrets once more. Our company fully recognizes the adverse effects this incident of plagiarism has inflicted upon RAIN. We owe an apology to RAIN as well. If RAIN is watching, please reach out to us. We are prepared to make amends.”

The scandal had not only sparked outrage among the public but had also inadvertently caused offense to RAIN.

If RAIN chose to escalate the issue, the repercussions could be severe.

Turning to Vernon, she bowed deeply to him as well, conveying her respect and regret.

“Stop! Don’t bow to me—you’ll jinx me,” Vernon interrupted brusquely, stepping to the side. His expression was one of disdain. “I don’t accept your apology. Aren’t you supposed to be apologizing to RAIN, too?”

He shot a look at Janice, who remained silent, then pressed on. “Why not take this chance to do so?”

“What did you just say?” Yvonne, caught off guard, blinked in surprise, then her expression turned to one of shock. “Are you implying that RAIN is here?”

“Yes, she’s right here,” Vernon replied, nodding firmly. “Right in front of you.”

“Who is it then?”

“It’s her,” Nolan declared, moving forward with an air of certainty. “Janice is RAIN.”

“No way!” Yvonne’s eyes widened as she turned to stare at Janice, her face a mask of disbelief. “How could that be? RAIN has always been a shadow, always avoiding the limelight. Why would she choose to reveal herself now?”

“Because I felt like it.” Janice offered a slight, knowing smile, her eyes twinkling mischievously. “Is there a rule against it?”

Yvonne found herself speechless, struck by Janice’s calm audacity, yet she struggled to accept that Janice was indeed RAIN. The idea seemed completely preposterous.

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Many viewers online mirrored Yvonne’s skepticism. Like Yvonne, they were dumbfounded at the revelation. For them, it felt like a celebrity had stepped into an utterly mundane moment—the disparity was almost dreamlike.

Aiden observed the unfolding drama, his gaze flickering with a trace of understanding before settling into a quiet relief. Although Janice had always been an enigma, wrapped in layers of mystery, her being unveiled as RAIN wasn’t as shocking as one might expect.

Still, a gut feeling nagged at him, suggesting that there was much more to Janice’s story than just the identity of RAIN.

A ghost of a smile played across Aiden's lips as curiosity sparked within him. Janice had become an enigma he yearned to unravel, her true capabilities a mystery that beckoned to be solved.

As RAIN, she stood atop the music industry like a queen on her throne, wielding enough influence to move through life unopposed. Yet she was willing to engage in this fake marriage with him. Why? For a fleeting moment, he wondered if the Green family's fortune was her ultimate goal.

The thought drew a bitter laugh from him as he remembered the contract between them. Once the shares changed hands, she would vanish from his life, leaving no threads to bind them together. Besides, someone who commanded the kind of power Janice did hardly needed to rely on the Green family's backing.

The realization settled heavily in his chest as he watched her illuminate the stage. For the first time in his life, Aiden felt the unsettling sensation of losing his grip on the situation. His hunger to understand her grew with each passing moment, even as the knowledge of their inevitable parting gnawed at his peace.

In the live broadcast, Nolan's voice cut through the tension with unwavering conviction. "I stake my entire music career on this truth—Janice is RAIN. I witnessed her performance at the royal banquet. Though RAIN wore a mask that night, I've compared them carefully. They are undeniably the same person. Janice is RAIN, the idol I've always admired."

The declaration sent ripples of bewilderment through the audience. While Nolan's admiration for the mysterious RAIN had made sense before, his continued worship now that she'd revealed herself as a young woman struck many as peculiar.

"Well, Ms. Byrd?" Vernon's lips curved into a taunting smile. "RAIN stands before us now. Shouldn't you be offering your apologies? Better hurry up."

Yvonne's face flushed with mortification. Her remarks from earlier now returned to haunt her. She'd calculated her risks based on one crucial assumption: RAIN's absence.

Even if there were repercussions later, the company would take the heat. But now, RAIN was standing before her.

The live revelation of RAIN's identity sparked an immediate chain reaction, rippling from the studio audience to millions of online viewers.

"Oh my gosh! This development is so dramatic! RAIN, who's guarded her identity for years, just revealed herself on live television? And she's Carman Edwards' sister of all people? Indeed dramatic!"

"This is hilarious! The Edwards family must have lost their minds to cast out someone of her caliber. With RAIN's influence, she could have been the rising tide to lift their entire family—especially Carman's career. Talk about shooting yourself in the foot!"

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"I'm literally choking on my noodles from laughing so hard. The Edwards family just wrote themselves into history as the architects of a billion-dollar blunder."

"I heard they even signed an agreement to cut ties officially. If they had any inkling of Janice's true standing in the music world, they'd be crawling into a hole right now."

The Edwards family found themselves thrust back into the spotlight, but this time as the target of nationwide derision. Their cast-aside daughter wasn't just successful—she was RAIN, a living legend who commanded the music industry from its zenith.

In their shortsightedness, they'd not only driven her away but legally severed ties. Their actions were destined to become a cautionary tale, discussed and mocked for years to come.

"No. She can't be RAIN!" Before Yvonne could muster a word, Carman burst from his frenzied state, his bloodshot eyes boring into Janice with unbridled hostility. "She's nothing but worthless trash our family threw away. RAIN? Her? That's absolutely impossible!"

A soft, amused sigh escaped Janice's lips as she watched Carman unravel before her. "It seems you're determined to blind yourself to reality. I suppose anyone would lose their grip after realizing they'd squandered such a golden opportunity, though. But regardless of who I am, one fact remains unchangeable."

Carman's pupils constricted to pinpoints as panic clawed its way through his chest. He shook his head frantically.

Terror coursed through his veins as realization dawned on him. He could read the words forming on Janice's lips.

He knew that once she voiced this truth, it would shatter everything he'd built—his carefully crafted pride, his manufactured dignity, his meticulously maintained facade.

"You, Carman Edwards, are nothing but a complete failure."

Overcome with anger, Carman suddenly spat blood and collapsed, his eyes rolling into unconsciousness.

"Someone call an ambulance, now!" Yvonne wasted no time, springing into action and instructing the staff to whisk him away.

Privately, she exhaled a breath of relief, pleased to avoid an apology to Janice.

Vernon moved to step in, but Janice held him back.

"Leave her. An apology from her means nothing," Janice said. Yvonne, merely a manager, held little weight with her words.

Vernon asked, "Should we deal with Starshine Entertainment?"

"No need," Janice answered with a cunning smile. "Carman's debacle will surely stir trouble at Starshine Entertainment. Why eliminate Star Entertainment when they can distress him for us?"

Vernon beamed, giving Janice an approving thumbs-up. Janice's strategy was flawless, cleverly manipulating situations to her advantage. Vernon realized he had much to learn from her.

“Janice, you’re absolutely incredible,” Sierra exclaimed, her eyes lit up with admiration. “I’ve never been more certain that aligning with you was the right decision.”

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Janice smiled, ruffling her hair affectionately. Sierra was right; aligning with her was indeed a wise decision.

If the Ramirez family ever became a threat, Janice had the prowess to protect Sierra and lead her toward a promising future.

Janice’s attention then turned to Nolan, who nervously fidgeted and scratched his nose. “RAIN...”

“Just call me by my real name,” Janice interrupted coolly.

“Janice, forgive me. I got carried away, hoping to hear you perform,” Nolan admitted awkwardly.

After a brief pause, Janice said, “You’ve heard the performance. Now, how about some compensation?”

“Compensation?” Nolan looked puzzled, unsure what he could offer someone who seemed to have it all.

Janice surveyed the crowd of fans approaching and flashed a sly grin. “You can start by managing this crowd. And, you owe me dinner.”

Nolan was momentarily stunned, then overjoyed, but his face quickly turned to one of horror.

“RAIN! I love your music. Can I take a photo with you?”

“Ah! RAIN, your biggest fan here. I promise to behave.”

“RAIN, you’re amazing! I wish I could have your baby.”

The fan who made such an audacious comment was quickly subdued, receiving blows from every direction until his face was barely recognizable.

RAIN was renowned for her grace and beauty; such insolent remarks were met with swift retaliation.

By then, Janice had taken Sierra's hand and dashed away, leaving Nolan to manage the crowd of enthusiastic fans on his own.

In that instant, Nolan understood the magnitude of the task Janice had handed him.

Amidst the escalating chaos of the live broadcast, an unknown force suddenly intervened, terminating the feed.

At the same time, every online image of Janice vanished from the internet, leaving only the fleeting memories of those who had seen the broadcast as evidence of her existence.

"Tsk. Janice really didn't hold back this time," Prescott said, pushing his glasses up with a resigned sigh. "If her real identity is revealed, public appearances might become impossible for her."

"Isn't that where your expertise comes in?" Leah inquired, leaning casually against Prescott's chair, her lips curled into a knowing smile. "With your skills, wiping the digital slate clean should be a breeze."

"True, it's not challenging," Prescott admitted, his expression showing slight annoyance. "But the real issue is those who've seen her face-to-face. Any real-world encounters could still stir up problems."

Leah dismissed his concerns with a shake of her head. "Janice must have her reasons for letting things unfold this way. The situation is manageable as long as she permits it."

Leah pondered for a moment. "Did you see her expression? She seemed genuinely amused."

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Prescott blinked, realizing it was true. When Janice ran with Sierra, the smile on her lips was undeniable, showing she had finally let off some steam.

It appeared the Edwards family was in for a string of challenges.

With Lowell and now Carman affected, who would be next? As the Edwards family faced these trials one by one, they would surely rue the day they overlooked the daughter they once cast aside.

A wave of eager anticipation washed over Prescott as he envisioned the Edwards family's shock upon realizing that their adopted daughter paled in comparison to the daughter they had cast out.

With this thrilling prospect in mind, Prescott returned to his laptop, his fingers flying across the keyboard.

The event was broadcast live, instantly sending shockwaves across the digital landscape. Despite Prescott's formidable prowess in technology, the situation rapidly spiraled out of control.

To contain the chaos, he enlisted the aid of his trusted group of elite hackers, renowned for their skills. They threw themselves into the task with fierce intensity, scrubbing the web clean of Janice's personal details. Within hours, nearly all mentions of Janice were erased.

Any efforts to upload her pictures were met with immediate distortion or censorship, rendering the images unrecognizable. Those curious to uncover the true face behind RAIN were thwarted, their hopes dashed.

Rumors started to swirl, with many speculating whether the incident was just an intricately staged deception.

In a strategic move, Prescott mobilized a legion of online trolls to steer the conversation. They propagated the narrative that the whole ordeal was a cleverly orchestrated publicity stunt.

According to them, Janice was not RAIN. They pointed fingers at Carman, accusing him of concocting the story to smear his sister's image.

As real witnesses tried to correct the record, their efforts were overwhelmed by the relentless wave of trolls. The counternarrative grew stronger, silencing dissent.

The fans began to piece together the puzzle, realizing that such a meticulously coordinated effort could only signify the involvement of RAIN's own team, intent on safeguarding her anonymity.

Before long, even those who had initially sought to expose the truth shifted their stance, aligning themselves with the efforts to protect RAIN's closely guarded identity.

Being privy to secrets the public didn't know about bestowed upon them a thrilling sense of exclusivity, a sensation they savored deeply.

As the story unfolded, even Prescott found himself caught off guard by its twists. The enigma of RAIN's true identity coalesced into a fervent crusade among the fans, who vowed to shield their idol's anonymity at all costs.

Such was the capricious nature of the internet—ever unpredictable and winding in its course.

At Auburn Hospital, Carman was already alert when he arrived, yet his lack of response was alarming. His vacant stare only heightened the worries of the Edwards family.

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Connor, anxious and breathless, burst into the room. "How's he holding up?" he inquired, his gaze fixed on Carman's pallid, inert face, his brow creasing with concern.

Laurie drew him to the side with a heavy sigh. "The doctors examined him thoroughly, and physically, he's intact. However, it appears he's taken a severe emotional hit. That's the reason for his current state."

"An emotional hit?" Connor's surprise was evident. "But wasn't today supposed to be his fan meeting? What exactly went down?"

Laurie, having only snippets of the incident, struggled to connect the dots. She had hoped Carman might shed some light, yet he remained silent.

“Dad, Mom, this is all because of Janice!” Just then, Delilah charged into the room, her eyes red as though she had cried not long ago. “At Carman’s event, she conspired with Vernon using Aiden’s influence to accuse Carman of plagiarism. They orchestrated the whole scheme in advance. Carman was defenseless, and the ordeal overwhelmed him, causing him to collapse.”

With tears welling in her eyes, she looked over at Carman, who lay motionless in the bed. “He poured his soul into crafting that new song, and yet...” Her voice dwindled into silence, leaving Connor and Laurie to fill in the unsaid words.

“This is absolutely unforgivable!” Connor’s face flushed with anger as he tightly balled his fists. “Can you believe that worthless ingrate? We cast her out, and still, she haunts us. Is this her twisted form of vengeance?”

His thoughts flew back to the chaos at the recent bidding event, fueling his growing rage.

Janice’s actions appeared calculating—first, she disrupted the bidding, and now, she was slandering Carman with accusations of theft. It was clear she was targeting their family one by one.

“Dad, Mom, perhaps it’s best if I leave.” Desolation tinged Delilah’s voice. “Maybe if I’m gone, Janice will cease her attacks. I can’t bear to see our family torn apart because of me.”

Laurie felt a sharp pang in her heart. “Don’t even think that way, Delilah. Janice is the root of our troubles. Even if you leave...” She hesitated, a shadow of doubt crossing her mind, but quickly dismissed it. “Our family would still be in turmoil because of Janice,” she stated firmly, pushing her doubts away.

“Mom, is there really no way out?” Delilah sighed. “With the Green family’s power, as long as Janice stays in their favor, she can keep making life hard for us. We’re really at our breaking point.”

Connor rubbed his temples, fully aware of how dire the situation was.

If the Green family continued supporting Janice, allowing her to act without restraint, the Edwards family would face endless struggles.

Though still one of the top four families, the Edwards family was hanging by a thread. Moreover, their business had hit a wall, with projects grinding to a halt—a sharp downturn from their once seamless success.

It was a stark contrast to their previously smooth operations.

It seemed to have all started after Janice left. Could it be...? No, that was impossible.

Connor quickly dismissed a connecting thought as paranoid.

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Janice was nothing but trouble for the Edwards family. With her gone, things should've gotten better.

The current difficulties had to be the Green family's intentional suppression, nothing more.

"I'll handle it," Connor declared, his eyes hard and resolute. "If she wants to play dirty, she'll find I can play dirtier."

Laurie's heart skipped a beat. "Connor, what are you planning to do?" she asked nervously.

Connor glanced at her without responding, the dangerous glint in his eyes growing darker.

"Connor, please don't do anything stupid! Remember, she's still—"

"Enough!" Connor cut her off abruptly. "She's nothing but a threat, a villain out to destroy the Edwards family. Leave this to me. I'll deal with it."

Laurie opened her mouth to protest but chose to remain silent eventually.

Connor then looked at Delilah, signaling her to come with him.

Outside, Delilah asked cautiously, "Dad, what's the plan? I'll do whatever it takes for our family."

Connor saw Delilah's determination and felt a surge of pride. "The deal with Delgado Jewelry and Freak Design is locked in, right?"

Delilah nodded. "Yes, the designs are ready, and the exhibition is next Monday."

"Excellent." Connor's expression turned calculating, a harsh smile forming. "Delilah, for the sake of our family's future, you may need to take a bold step this time."

Delilah's expression sharpened. "Dad, just tell me what needs to be done. I'm ready."

Connor nodded, his strategy clear. "Janice is only confident because Aiden supports her. If Aiden were to turn against her, she'd lose everything. Then..."

Delilah quickly caught on to Connor's plan. "Dad, do we really need to go that far? Isn't it too cruel to Janice?"

"That ungrateful girl brought this upon herself. It's her own doing. Just cooperate with me, and I'll take care of the rest."

"Okay," Delilah replied, taking a deep breath as though bracing herself for a major decision. "For this family, I'll do whatever it takes!"

Connor raised a hand and patted her shoulder, his eyes filled with approval. Despite being adopted, Delilah had shown more loyalty and dedication than their own flesh and blood.

“Delilah, Lowell is already out of the picture, and Carman and Dotson are busy with their own careers. Edwards Group will likely depend on you in the future.”

Delilah allowed herself a moment of pride but remained modest. “Dad, let’s not lose hope for Lowell. I’m sure he will recover.”

Connor shook his head sadly. “Lowell’s taken a severe hit. He’s been shut away for days. When I saw him yesterday, he looked utterly broken, something I never thought I’d see.”

“How is this possible?” Delilah exclaimed in feigned shock, though inside, she was thrilled.