

## Wrath 261

### Chapter 261:

Janice's face wore a look of intrigue, but no immediate reply came. Their interactions were rare, despite being colleagues. And now Andrew was suddenly extending a coffee?

"Do you want to borrow money from me?" she asked.

"What?" Andrew blurted out, clearly thrown off by her question, vigorously shaking his head. "No, no, I'm not looking to borrow money."

"Then what's the coffee for?" Janice withdrew her hands from the keyboard, her curiosity unabated. "There's no such thing as a free lunch, after all. If it's not money, what do you need? Is something wrong at work?"

"Hey, Andrew," Sierra chimed in playfully. "Don't tell me you're trying to get on Janice's good side because she has a meeting with Freak Design today. You're hoping she might bring you along, aren't you?"

Andrew's discomfort grew more evident. All he had intended was to make a favorable impression on Janice. Yet somehow, it had turned into a conversation about favors.

"That wasn't my intention," Andrew replied through clenched teeth, reaching for the coffee cup. "If you don't want it—"

"Who says I'm turning it down?" Sierra interjected, grabbing the coffee from Andrew's hand. She took large, eager gulps, seemingly unbothered by the heat. "Coffee's always better when it's free."

She let out a satisfied burp, earning a playful eye-roll from Janice. "Worried about scalding your tongue?"

Sierra flashed a broad smile. "I prefer it scorching hot. It's comforting somehow."

Andrew watched in disbelief as the coffee meant for Janice quickly disappeared into Sierra. Feeling embarrassed yet powerless to protest given Sierra's higher status, he bit back his frustration.

"I should get back to work," he said, masking his humiliation with a rigid face as he returned to his desk. Delilah caught his eye and offered an encouraging glance. Acknowledging her with a smile, Andrew restored his usual poise. He knew winning Janice over would be challenging, but that only added to her allure. He was convinced that his genuine efforts would eventually endear him to her.

"Janice, is it just me, or is Andrew behaving unusually today?" Sierra rested her chin on her hand, her eyes turning to Andrew, who had settled back at his desk. "Did you notice how he was looking at you? That wasn't just friendly."

"What exactly did you notice?" Janice asked, her interest piqued.

"He's definitely into you," Sierra said with a sly grin. "But isn't he overstepping? You're Aiden's wife. Going after you would be like picking a fight with Aiden."

Raising one eyebrow, Janice considered this. Andrew's look had indeed been unusually intense.

But why the change? He typically kept to himself, hardly making eye contact with her. What brought on this newfound audacity?

"Janice, you should steer clear of Andrew. The man's nothing but trouble. Remember how he sided with Delilah during that whole reputation-smearing fiasco?" Sierra's warning cut through the air.

The memory crystallized in Janice's mind—Delilah orchestrating a public witch hunt over Carman's scandal, with Andrew leading the charge of accusations.

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Was this deliberate?

A ghost of a smile played across Janice's lips as she traced her chin thoughtfully. Human nature, with all its complexities, never ceased to intrigue her.

At this moment, the message alert pulled her from her reverie.

Turning her attention to the computer screen, Janice replied, "Someone just brought me coffee."

"Turning heads wherever you go, aren't you?" Leah's response sparkled with mischief. Janice's eyes rolled skyward. "Shut up."

A crying emoji popped up instantly from Leah.

"Enough dramatics. Lunch today?" Janice asked.

"Absolutely!" Leah replied.

"Same place as always."

"Got it."

And with that, the chat ended.

"Janice, come in for a minute." Stella's voice pierced the office air.

Framed in Stella's doorway, Janice observed the telling contrast—her own steely composure against Stella's barely concealed agitation.

"Janice, have you contacted Freak Design?" Stella's fingers betrayed her anxiety, tapping an uneven rhythm on the table.

“This exhibition is pivotal; our international expansion hinges on its success.” Stella pressed her fingertips to her temples, anxiety threading through her voice. “This is a make-or-break moment for Delgado Jewelry’s expansion into international markets.”

“Take a deep breath, Stella.” Janice’s voice carried quiet wisdom. “Sometimes overthinking is our worst enemy.”

Stella smiled bitterly. “That’s easy for you to say. This isn’t just another exhibition—it’s Mr. Delgado’s debut project and our gateway to...”

International markets. The board’s watching like hawks, ready to make me their sacrificial lamb if anything falters.” Stella’s concern wasn’t without reason.

Kenneth had inherited the company under a microscope of expectations. Delgado Jewelry was his trial by fire, his one chance to prove himself worthy of the family legacy. The weight of it all pressed heavily on Stella’s shoulders, caught between ambitious plans and merciless scrutiny.

“Walk me through exactly how you handled the communication,” Stella pressed. Her tone cut like glass, worry seeping through the cracks. “Give me the details.”

Janice hesitated, an uncertain look flickering across her face. “We just talked normally.”

The hope drained from Stella’s expression. “What exactly do you mean? Janice, don’t tell me you’ve messed this up!”

A serene smile played on Janice’s lips as she dismissed Stella’s concerns. “Relax, Stella. When I’m handling things, there’s no need to worry.”

“Then what precisely did you do?”

“We chatted casually and arranged to meet for lunch later.”

“That’s it?” Stella stared at her, utterly stunned. Anger blazed in her eyes. “Are you serious? You’re wasting time on chitchat and lunch dates instead of finalizing the actual collaboration? What about the exhibition layout? The schedule coordination?”

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“They’ll manage everything perfectly fine.”

Stella’s jaw went slack. She rubbed her temples, fighting an impending migraine. Had Janice just delegated the entire exhibition to Freak Design? What exactly was Delgado Jewelry expected to do? Stand idly by and observe?

“Janice!” Stella’s voice thundered from her office, startling everyone in the open workspace.

The employees exchanged uneasy glances, each one silently speculating about what could have prompted such an explosive outburst.

“Ugh, Janice must have let all that praise from Stella and Mr. Delgado go straight to her head, don’t you think?”

“Totally! She struts around here like she’s untouchable. Guess she finally slipped up and landed in hot water with Stella.”

“Looks like someone’s about to get knocked down a peg.” Delilah and Cheryl shared a knowing look.

With a resigned sigh, Cheryl muttered, “Let’s not forget, her husband is Aiden Green. She’s only working here at Delgado Jewelry to play at being ‘one of us.’ If she messes up, you can bet the Green family will sweep it all under the rug, and we’ll be left holding the bag.”

This little jab set off a ripple of frustration among the group.

“Exactly! It’s bad enough dealing with her holier-than-thou attitude; now she’s dragging us into her mess?”

“Right? We’re already burning the midnight oil for this exhibition, and now we’ve got to clean up after her too? Give me a break!”

Grumbles and side-eyes spread like wildfire, the employees growing increasingly annoyed with Janice despite having no idea what actually happened in Stella’s office.

“What a load of rubbish!” Sierra finally snapped, unable to keep quiet any longer. She shot up from her seat, her voice sharp with indignation. “Janice is one of the most diligent people here. If something’s wrong, it’s probably Stella losing her marbles—maybe it’s just menopause kicking in!”

“Ha-ha!” Delilah couldn’t suppress her laughter. “Miss Ramirez, you shouldn’t say things like that. If Stella gets wind of it, she’ll make your life miserable.”

“Exactly! How could someone from such a distinguished family behave so rudely? Stella’s only in her early thirties. How on earth could she be going through menopause?”

“Well, birds of a feather flock together,” Cheryl quipped with a sly smile.

Sierra’s eyes narrowed as she shot Cheryl a sharp look. “And what exactly do you mean by that?”

“Alright, everyone, let’s not blow this out of proportion,” Andrew interjected, standing up to play peacemaker. “Jumping to conclusions won’t do anyone any good. If there’s been a misunderstanding, we’re only adding fuel to the fire.”

“Andrew, since when did you get so level-headed?” Cheryl smirked, folding her arms. “Last I checked, you were pretty vocal about your issues with Janice.”

Andrew’s expression froze. He darted a nervous glance at Sierra, noting her furrowed brows, and felt an uncomfortable heat rise in his chest.

“Don’t start spreading nonsense!” he snapped, his voice unusually firm. “When have I ever been dissatisfied with Janice? Sure, I might’ve been a bit blunt, but that’s hardly a crime.”

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It was obvious his words were directed at Sierra, but her expression only grew more skeptical. Andrew's odd behavior set off alarm bells in her head.

"Andrew, don't tell me you've got a thing for Janice?" Cheryl said with a sly grin, her tone dripping with mischief.

Andrew tried to maintain his composure, but his flushed cheeks betrayed him. The room buzzed with surprise as the rest of their colleagues stared at him, wide-eyed.

"No way! Andrew has a thing for Janice?"

"Now that Cheryl's brought it up, it makes sense. Didn't he make Janice a cup of coffee this morning? That's not something he does for just anyone."

"Seriously? Janice is married. Andrew's taste sure is unconventional."

"Unconventional? Try downright daring. Janice is Aiden Green's wife. He's set to inherit the reins of the Green family, the most powerful name in all of Efrery."

The sound of his colleagues gossiping reached Andrew's ears, making his pulse race and his face drain of color. He had never imagined his secret would come out so quickly. It felt like he was trapped under a spotlight.

Delilah caught the change in Andrew's demeanor and couldn't help but smirk. Without making a scene, she locked eyes with Cheryl, an unspoken understanding passing between them.

"Andrew, wake up! A woman like Janice? She's way out of your league," Cheryl mocked, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "Maybe you should take a long, hard look in the mirror, buddy. What makes you think you stand a chance against Aiden Green?"

Sierra, sensing something wasn't right, furrowed her brow in confusion. Moments ago, everyone was throwing shade at Janice, but now they were all ganging up on Andrew. Moreover, Andrew seemed more rattled than usual, like something had really gotten under his skin.

"Enough! All of you, just shut up!" Andrew snapped, his voice raw with anger. His bloodshot eyes blazed with fury. "Why can't I go after real love? So what if Janice is married? Can't she just get a divorce?"

The room went dead silent, everyone taken aback by Andrew's bold, out-of-nowhere declaration.

"Andrew, do you even hear yourself?" Sierra asked, now fully concerned, her voice sharp. "Aiden and Janice are solid. They're not getting a divorce, not in a million years. You better rein in those thoughts of yours, or—"

"What? Are you going to kill me?" Andrew retorted, his temper flaring. He almost went further, about to spill the beans that Janice and Aiden's marriage was just a sham. But then he caught Delilah's glare.

He swallowed the words back down, realizing he couldn't risk it. Not now. Aiden and Janice hadn't officially called it quits yet, and if he spilled the beans now, he'd be digging his own grave with Aiden.

He wasn't sure what made him blurt out such reckless words earlier, but deep down, he knew they were just words. Surely, Aiden wouldn't actually make a move against him, right? But if he spilled the truth now, there was no doubt Aiden would be out for blood.

"I'm not feeling well. I think I'll take the rest of the day off," Andrew mumbled, scrambling to grab his things in a panic and practically fleeing the scene.

Sierra watched Andrew rush off, her mind whirling. She then turned to Delilah, sensing that something wasn't right. The whole situation felt off, leaving a lingering unease in the air.

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The sound of a soft click echoed as the door to Stella's office creaked open.

Everyone turned toward the door in an instant, some already preparing excuses in case they needed to cover their tracks.

But when they saw Stella stepping out with Janice, both of them wearing bright, radiant smiles, their expressions froze in sheer shock. They couldn't believe their eyes.

"Janice, I'll leave this matter in your capable hands," Stella said, her voice unusually warm as she clasped Janice's hand, a dazzling smile lighting up her face. It was brighter than anyone had ever seen from her before.

Stella, who was usually all business and rarely showed even a hint of softness, hadn't smiled like this, not even for Kenneth. So what on earth had just gone down in that office?

"Don't worry, Stella," Janice replied with her usual grace. "I'll take care of it."

"That's all I need to hear." Stella's smile vanished in an instant as she whipped around to face the room, her glare sharp and cutting. "What are you all staring at? If you're not busy, go clean the toilets. Looks like some of you have way too much free time."

The colleagues lowered their heads, scrambling to tidy up their desks.

Delilah's brow furrowed, her eyes never leaving Janice. There was something off about this whole situation.

Stella had been livid just moments ago. Could it be...?

Delilah's eyes narrowed, a knowing smirk playing at the corner of her lips. As Janice passed by, she couldn't resist a jab. "Well, well, seems like having a powerful backer really changes the game, huh? Bet you pulled the JE's bestie card this time, didn't you?"

Janice cast a fleeting glance at Delilah before turning away, gliding back to her seat.

Delilah's knuckles whitened as she clenched her fists, bitterness darkening her gaze. Though cast out from the Edwards family, Janice had landed on her feet—flourishing under the Green family's protection and basking in her status as JE's best friend.

The irony wasn't lost on Delilah—here she was, the supposed Edwards heiress, watching her former rival rise even higher. But Janice's golden days were numbered, Delilah assured herself silently. Her features hardened into ice as envy and malice coiled around her heart.

"Janice, what was that scene about?" Sierra leaned in the moment Janice settled into her seat.

Seeing no harm in Sierra's innocent curiosity, Janice freely shared the details. "Stella gave me an earful, worried I might've rubbed Freak Design's representative the wrong way."

"What?" Sierra's jaw dropped. "Has she lost it? Didn't you already speak with them?"

"I explained that it was just casual conversation and we're going to have lunch together."

Understanding flickered across Sierra's face. In Stella's position, she might have reacted similarly. After all, Stella had navigated this collaboration with surgical precision, treating each detail like spun glass. Janice's casual approach must have seemed like throwing caution to the wind.

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"How did you manage to smooth things over?" Sierra pressed, intrigue dancing in her eyes.

"Just called Freak Design." Janice's shoulders lifted in a casual shrug, her expression unruffled.

Sierra's brow creased in confusion. Who could Janice possibly have called?

"It's Leah Sugden," Janice added before Sierra could voice her question. "You know I'm JE's best friend, right?"

Sierra nodded eagerly.

“Leah and JE are friends too. Think about what that means.”

Understanding illuminated Sierra’s features.

Right! Janice’s friendship with JE was her trump card. JE’s influence stretched far beyond international borders, dwarfing Leah’s own considerable status. Such a connection naturally commanded Leah’s respect and cooperation.

“Janice, you’re amazing!”

“It’s nothing, really.”

But before Janice could settle into her modest deflection, she caught Sierra’s hopeful, gleaming eyes.

Janice froze, then dropped her head into her hands with a groan. “I should have kept my mouth shut.”

“Janice, pretty please!” Sierra latched onto Janice’s arm, giving it an enthusiastic shake. “You’re absolutely wonderful! You wouldn’t leave me to eat lunch all by myself, would you?”

With a resigned sigh, Janice conceded to bringing Sierra along to her lunch with Leah.

Leah had crafted her appearance with meticulous care—a flowing dress in ethereal blues and whites that enhanced her natural grace. Her subtle makeup completed the almost mythical quality of her beauty.

To the world, Leah projected an aura of razor-sharp intimidation, but around Janice, she donned a different mask—the epitome of grace and charm, a gentle soul who could have lived next door.

“Janice, who might this be?” Leah’s question carried a note of frost. Sierra’s proximity to Janice—clinging like an adoring younger sister—hadn’t escaped her notice, and she sensed a deeper bond between them.

Her gaze turned subtly accusatory, wounded, as if Janice had committed some silent betrayal.

Janice cleared her throat, navigating the delicate moment. “Allow me to make introductions. This is Sierra Ramirez. She’s found herself at odds with her family lately, so she’s been keeping me company for the time being.”

“Ramirez?” Leah’s eyes narrowed to calculating crescents as she reassessed Sierra with newfound interest.

But her stern facade crumbled almost instantly, melting into a smile that spoke of amused resignation.

“Wow, Ms. Sugden, you’re absolutely stunning!” Sierra gushed, her eyes sparkling with admiration as she gazed at Leah. “I think you’re the most beautiful woman aside from Janice.”

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Leah’s lips twitched with amusement at Sierra’s enthusiastic flattery, her expression a mix of indulgence and restraint.

Before Leah could respond, Sierra plopped down beside her, clasping Leah’s hands in a sudden burst of familiarity.

Leah blinked, caught off guard by the spontaneous gesture. Was Sierra always this naturally warm and unabashedly friendly?

Just as Leah was about to extricate herself, she met Sierra’s earnest gaze. Something in those wide, hopeful eyes made her hesitate.

“Ms. Sugden, can I call you Leah? I feel like it’d make us closer,” Sierra asked, her tone brimming with hopeful anticipation.

“Uh... sure, if that’s what you prefer,” Leah replied, darting a silent plea for rescue towards Janice.

Leah could handle schemers without breaking a sweat, but Sierra’s guileless enthusiasm was a different kettle of fish entirely.

Janice, however, offered no help, her expression unreadable.

This was Sierra’s magic; her effervescent charm had a way of winning people over, even those as stoic as Janice.

“Leah, meeting you is like a dream come true! You’re such an incredible woman,” Sierra continued, her excitement bubbling over like a shaken soda. “You started Freak Design from scratch and turned it into a powerhouse. That’s beyond inspiring! Could you share a few success secrets with me?”

“There’ll be time for that,” Leah replied, her initial wariness melting under Sierra’s unrelenting cheer.

“Perfect! Let’s exchange contact info. You and Janice are my ultimate role models. Oh, and JE too—I hope I get to meet her someday. She must be amazing to have friends like you two!”

“She’s truly one of a kind,” Leah agreed, shooting Janice a sly, knowing glance.

Janice, unbothered, sipped her water with studied indifference.

Leah rolled her eyes at her friend’s cool demeanor, a flicker of sympathy stirring for Sierra. Poor girl—she was raving about JE, blissfully unaware that her idol was sitting right there. Sierra’s reaction when the penny finally dropped would be a sight to behold.

But why did this bubbly, effervescent young woman seem so familiar?

The lively chatter and easy camaraderie filled the air, with Sierra’s voice leading the charge.

Leah glanced at Janice, who met her gaze with an amused, knowing smile. Heat rose to Leah's cheeks as understanding dawned on her.

It dawned on her.

She used to jabber endlessly to Janice, just like Sierra was now. Life had come full circle, and Leah was tasting her own medicine.

Janice felt a quiet triumph, her instincts validated. Inviting Sierra along had been a stroke of genius. Watching Leah deal with her carbon copy was a source of no small amusement.

"By the way, Glenn's out of the hospital," Leah announced. "He mentioned we should swing by the orphanage when we have time. He's planning to cook for us."

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A flicker of nostalgia softened Janice's face. "It's been so long since I've tasted Glenn's cooking. I really miss it."

"Let's pencil it in after the exhibition wraps up," Leah suggested, her tone bright.

"Deal."

Lunch rolled on in a blur of laughter and banter.

Sierra talked a mile a minute, leaving Leah to shoot Janice a series of desperate, almost comical looks.

But Janice played it cool, savoring the poetic justice. Once upon a time, Leah had been Sierra—a whirlwind of chatter. It seemed her first hunch had been spot on—Leah and Sierra were two peas in a pod, kindred spirits through and through.

Amid the mirth, Janice's phone buzzed with a message. She took a quick peek; it was from Nina. The photo made her pause.

Nina, in oversized sunglasses, radiated confidence with her dazzling smile. Standing beside her was Alcott, weighed down with shopping bags, his gaze fixed on her with unmistakable adoration.

Janice exhaled a quiet sigh. Alcott might not have been the epitome of fatherhood, but his devotion to Nina was undeniable. Perhaps the story behind the illegitimate son was more nuanced than it appeared.

"Janice, we're off. Keep an eye on the Green family and Aiden for us, will you?"

The grand joint exhibition between Delgado Jewelry and Freak Design unveiled itself in spectacular fashion. Efrery's Cultural Center buzzed with an atmosphere of opulence and celebration as the event commenced.

A parade of luxury vehicles graced the front parking lot, each one releasing its cargo of society's elite—men and women draped in finery and adorned with glittering jewels. Their presence painted the scene in strokes of pure luxury.

The exhibition itself stood as a testament to uncompromising excellence.

Stepping inside, guests found themselves transported to a world of royal grandeur. The sumptuous atmosphere perfectly married the refined elegance of both Delgado Jewelry and Freak Design.

Janice, one of the masterminds behind the exhibition's featured pieces, made an entrance befitting her status. Her choice of attire—a sleek black gown devoid of excessive ornamentation—celebrated simplicity through impeccable tailoring that traced her elegant silhouette.

Though free of elaborate patterns, the gown's fabric whispered luxury with every movement. Under the exhibition lights, it rippled with subtle waves of darkness, turning Janice's natural beauty into the evening's most captivating display.

Even Sierra couldn't contain her admiration. "Janice, your mere presence outshines even the jewelry on display!"

"Such a charming flatterer you are!" Janice's fingers ruffled Sierra's hair playfully. Since their arrival, Sierra had shadowed Janice's every step, like a devoted assistant. She had proudly dubbed herself Janice's "personal assistant," declaring it her sacred duty to remain at Janice's side throughout the evening.

"Your mother isn't here, is she?" Janice asked, finding it odd that Leonie hadn't shown up for an event like this.

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Sierra's expression fell slightly, her lips forming a small pout. "She's probably steering clear of any drama." She had left home, and her mother had sent bodyguards to take her home by force. Meeting here would be awkward for them.

"Perfectly understandable," Janice murmured, smoothing Sierra's collar. Her eyes took in the young girl's appearance, noting how the soft pink dress cast a rosy glow over her features, lending her an air of innocent charm. The ensemble stood in stark contrast to the austere formal attire Leonie typically insisted upon.

Those choices had never sat well with Sierra's spirit.

Clearly, Sierra had picked her own outfit this time.

"There are a few things I'd love to discuss with her," Janice mused thoughtfully.

Sierra's eyes sparkled with curiosity. "Like what?"

Janice's lips curved into a warm smile as she tapped Sierra's nose playfully. "I'd ask her secret for raising such a delightful daughter."

"Oh, you silver-tongued charmer! Don't stop now!" Sierra beamed, her cheeks flooding with shyness.

“Janice, this exhibition is nothing short of magnificent. The guests are utterly captivated—a testament to your dedication to this event.” Stella glided over at that moment, offering Janice a measured nod of approval.

She cut an impressive figure herself today, adorned with carefully selected jewelry that proclaimed her status as a formidable businesswoman. Yet standing beside Janice, Stella felt her carefully crafted presence diminish. An uncomfortable sensation crept over her—as if she had somehow been reduced to the role of an assistant rather than a superior.

Inwardly, she acknowledged the bitter truth: some forms of grace simply couldn’t be acquired through effort alone.

“Your kind words mean a lot, Stella. Though truly, this exhibition’s success rests entirely on Freak Design’s generous support,” Janice responded with effortless grace, her modest demeanor only serving to enhance her natural charm.

While Stella painted on a professional smile, frustration simmered beneath her polished exterior. Of course Freak Design had spared no expense—what else would they do for JE’s best friend? Freak Design had orchestrated every minute detail of the venue’s decoration, with Janice’s involvement being largely ceremonial. Yet here she stood, her false modesty ringing hollow.

“You’ll ensure Mr. Delgado properly acknowledges your contributions,” Stella remarked, masking her sigh with practiced grace. She consoled herself that as long as the exhibition achieved its goals, she could stomach Janice’s artful performance.

“I appreciate your thoughtfulness, Stella,” Janice replied, her smile a picture of innocence.

Their small talk dwindled to a natural close, and Stella glided away to attend to other distinguished guests. The exhibition had drawn an impressive constellation of society’s finest, their eyes gleaming with interest at the treasures on display.

Stella and her fellow Delgado Jewelry representatives took on their roles as guides.

“What’s drawing such a crowd to Delilah’s display?” Sierra’s question carried a note of genuine surprise. Following her gaze, Janice observed the sea of bodies surrounding Delilah’s booth.

Chapter 270:

The disparity was impossible to ignore—her own display attracted barely a third of the attention that Delilah’s space commanded.

“Ladies and gentlemen, behold ‘Starlit Dreams,’ my meticulously crafted bracelet.” Delilah stood beside the display case in her white evening gown, radiating elegance. She addressed the audience with steady confidence. “This piece draws its inspiration from Nyx, the Goddess of the Night. It challenges the conventional, blending ancient mythology with contemporary design. Embedded with blue diamonds, this bracelet not only symbolizes Nyx’s children but also embodies fertility and prosperity. I hope it brings every wearer closer to realizing her dreams.”

The audience burst into applause as Delilah concluded. “How inventive! To use Nyx’s symbolism of fertility as a metaphor for boundless potential is truly creative.”

“And the craftsmanship! Each angle presents a new aspect of its beauty, truly exceptional.”

“It’s clear the Edwards family has a talent in Delilah. Mrs. Edwards must be overjoyed.”

A pleased smile played on Delilah’s lips as she soaked in the flood of compliments. She exchanged a significant look with Laurie, who was close at hand. Laurie had specifically chosen these guests to ensure Delilah received ample support and praise.

Kenneth had set the stakes: the one who stood out at this exhibition would be named Stella’s second-in-command. While being Stella’s assistant wasn’t the highest honor, Delilah was determined not to let Janice outshine her.

The thought of Delilah, whom she had raised with care, losing to Janice was equally intolerable for Laurie.

“But isn’t the one next to it even more amazing?” A voice suddenly cut through the praise, redirecting the crowd’s gaze to the neighboring display case.

Inside, there was another bracelet, one that radiated a quiet, refined elegance. In contrast to Delilah's extravagant 'Starlit Dreams,' this piece embraced a more simple and understated design.

Its minimalist design disregarded decorated details for patterns that flowed with an understated grace. What made it so captivating was its versatility; from every angle, the bracelet seemed to change, presenting a new visual interpretation with each turn.

It wasn't immediately striking. Rather, its allure deepened the more one observed, compelling prolonged attention.

"This bracelet is called 'Mirage.'" Janice approached, her presence as mesmerizing as her creation. She stood next to the display, embodying the same understated elegance as her bracelet—both timeless and effortlessly enchanting. "My name is Janice Green, and I am the designer of 'Mirage.'"

"Wow! She's stunning, and so is her bracelet. They complement each other perfectly! It's no wonder she crafted something so outstanding."

"I was drawn to Delilah's bracelet initially, but Mirage has something extra. Delilah's design is like an ordinary girl dolled up in fancy attire, whereas Janice's bracelet resembles someone naturally graceful, no decoration needed."

"Absolutely! You have hit the mark."

The crowd started moving towards Janice's display, captivated by its subtle elegance.