

Wrath 271

Chapter 271:

Delilah's expression turned sour. She quickly signaled to the supporters she had arranged to be there.

"What is this, exactly? No gemstones, no sparkle—can this even be considered jewelry?"

"Right! It's just plain silver with some lines. How did this make it into the exhibition?"

"Delilah's bracelet is clearly the superior piece. The craftsmanship and creativity are evident."

The hired supporters wasted no time, showering Delilah's design with over-the-top compliments while criticizing Janice's design.

From the sidelines, Laurie observed the unfolding drama without remorse, relishing the manipulation. She reveled in seeing Janice's work diminished, eager for Janice to understand that despite her talent, she couldn't surpass the Edwards family on her own.

"What nonsense are they spewing?" Sierra's razor-sharp wit couldn't be contained any longer. "If you can't grasp basic aesthetics, maybe 'Sesame Street' is more your speed. Perfect for idiots like yourselves!"

Janice blinked, caught off guard by Sierra's caustic response.

Noticing her surprise, Sierra leaned in and whispered, "College forums and late-night video binges taught me well."

Janice arched an eyebrow. It all made sense now—even coming from the prestigious Ramirez family couldn't tame Sierra's rebellious spirit. The seeds of defiance had taken root long ago.

"Just who do you think you are?" A man stormed forward, his face flushed with anger. "Are you actually discriminating against guests at your own exhibition?"

“Yeah! Does Delgado Jewelry make you think you’re too good for us now? Without our support, those fancy designs of yours would collect dust!”

The hired crowd’s protests grew louder.

“Tell me, am I wrong? Anyone with even a shred of aesthetic sense can see that bracelet’s superiority.” Sierra’s voice remained ice-cold. “And your outrage...” Her gaze turned meaningfully to Delilah. “You all reek of paid performers following a script.”

The hired rabble-rousers faltered, panic flickering across their faces. They were mercenaries of opinion, after all—caring nothing for aesthetics, merely praising Delilah’s work because their paychecks demanded it.

“Something’s not adding up here.” A voice cut through the tension. “Their earlier comparisons of the bracelets felt hollow—praise without substance, criticism without merit.”

“You’re right! I noticed it too but chalked it up to different tastes since we’re all here for the exhibition. Now though, I’m having second thoughts.”

The murmurs of suspicion rippled through the crowd, causing beads of sweat to form on Delilah’s forehead. Quickly composing herself, she painted on a picture of wounded innocence. “Everyone, this exhibition represents a prestigious collaboration between Delgado Jewelry and Freak Design. Our standards are impeccable. How could there possibly be any deception?”

She cast a venomous glance at Janice, her voice dripping with calculated sweetness. “Actually, Janice and I have been at odds lately. It’s only natural she’d be displeased. But don’t let our personal grievances taint this exhibition.”

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A wave of understanding rippled through the crowd. They assumed it was a rivalry between two women. That explained the crackling tension in the air.

“Delilah, stop pretending,” Janice remarked coldly, her arms crossed as she watched this performance unfold.

But Sierra, her patience fraying at the edges, stepped forward with blazing eyes. “You know, watching you play the victim is getting really old. Want to swear these aren’t your hired guns? Or are you not quite that brave?”

Delilah’s composure cracked for a moment before she spat out, “And why wouldn’t I be?”

“Then swear it. Swear that if these people are your paid actors, your entire family will meet their end. Except Janice, naturally.”

“Sierra, it’s fine. I cut those ties long ago—the Edwards name means nothing to me now. Their curse can’t touch me.”

Janice’s casual dismissal made Delilah’s jaw tighten. “Great! Then go ahead and swear,” Sierra advanced, leaving Delilah no escape route.

The color drained from Delilah’s face. Sierra had backed her into a corner with surgical precision.

This wasn’t just any oath—it was a death wish for her entire family.

In the crowd, Laurie’s knuckles turned white, her fury barely contained.

Delilah was trapped—curse her family with the oath, or admit to her scheme by refusing.

All eyes were on Delilah, filled with curiosity and scrutiny.

Delilah felt like a helpless hen trussed up and left to sizzle over an open flame, with every eye in the room drilling into her like hot pokers.

“What’s the matter? Cat got your tongue?” Sierra sneered, tilting her head ever so slightly. “Or is it that you’re too scared to swear because these people are just stooges you hired?”

“I swear!” Delilah snapped, her teeth clenched so tight they could’ve cracked. “If they’re stooges I hired, then may the entire Edwards family perish!”

Janice’s applause echoed through the tension-filled room, sharp and deliberate. Her gaze flicked towards Laurie just in time to see the woman wobble on her feet as if she might collapse at any moment.

“Delilah, you truly have no limits,” Janice said, her mocking smile curling like smoke. “But even if your little curse came to pass, it’d be the Edwards family that bites the dust. What’s that to you? You’re just their adopted daughter.”

With those words, Janice reminded everyone yet again that Delilah wasn’t blood-related to the Edwards family. Whispers rippled through the crowd, the onlookers exchanging amused, knowing glances. If Delilah was just the adopted daughter, then her dramatic oath hardly held any weight. Just as Janice pointed out, if the Edwards family were wiped out, what skin would that be off Delilah’s nose?

Laurie, meanwhile, turned pale as a ghost. A memory she had tried to bury clawed its way to the surface, growing sharper and clearer with every passing second.

But she shook her head fiercely, refusing to let the past take hold. Delilah was her daughter now, not Janice. That was all that mattered.

At that moment, she felt a mocking gaze boring into her, sharp as a dagger.

Chapter 273:

She lifted her eyes and froze. Janice was staring right at her. Janice’s icy glare burned her pride to ashes.

It was as if Janice was saying, “See? Your precious daughter couldn’t care less if you and your family drop dead.”

Laurie shoved the panic deep down, refusing to let it show. Delilah only made that reckless vow to save face, to stop people from accusing her of hiring stooges. It was completely understandable.

Janice, on the other hand, was the real snake in the grass. She was ruthless and underhanded, stooping to the lowest tricks just to humiliate Delilah. If Janice hadn't...

"Been so vindictive, Delilah wouldn't have been pushed into making such an extreme oath."

Laurie told herself firmly—this mess was all Janice's doing. She sprang to Delilah's defense, her expression hardening as she shifted all the blame squarely onto Janice.

Janice watched Laurie's changing expressions with a chilly smirk. This woman was a lost cause, hopelessly adrift in her delusions. It was hard for Janice to fathom that she could be the offspring of someone so foolish.

However, Laurie seemed resolute in her denial, stubbornly walking deeper into the fog of self-deception.

"Janice, can you believe Delilah's nerve?" Sierra huffed, clearly exasperated. "She's playing dirty, no holds barred. People like her, with nothing left to lose, are impossible to outmaneuver."

"No need to rush." Janice's response was measured, her voice smooth and calm. The faint smile curling her lips was impossible to read. "The real show is just about to start."

"Huh?" Sierra blinked, confused by Janice's cryptic words. Before she could ask more, a sharp voice rose from the crowd, cutting through the buzz like a knife.

"Wasn't Delilah caught plagiarizing in that clothing design competition?" Though it wasn't shouted, the comment was loud enough to capture everyone's attention.

"What? She's a plagiarist? Seriously? How does she have the guts to show her face here?"

“You’ve got to be kidding. She got blacklisted from clothing design, and now she’s wormed her way into jewelry design? Some people really have no shame.”

“What about her so-called Starlit Dreams? Who’s to say that’s not stolen too? When it comes to plagiarism, it’s all or nothing.”

The murmurs swelled into a full-blown storm of accusations, the crowd’s disdain growing louder by the second. Delilah’s face drained of color, leaving her looking ghostly pale. Her frantic voice cracked as she tried to defend herself.

“I didn’t plagiarize! This design is mine. Please, you have to believe me!”

Her eyes brimmed with tears, a desperate attempt to stir some pity. But the onlookers, fueled by doubt and disdain, weren’t buying it. Her pleas fell on deaf ears, leaving her isolated in the rising tide of judgment.

Delilah’s anxiety grew as the noise around her escalated. If this continued, it was only a matter of time before Freak Design took notice. And once their sharp eyes were on her, it would be game over. Freak Design was famous for its zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism.

Chapter 274:

Delilah turned to Janice, suspicion crawling under her skin. Could Janice have hired these people to ruin her?

As if reading her mind, Janice met her gaze just then. The smirk on her face said it all, a smug assurance that confirmed Delilah’s worst suspicions.

For a heartbeat, Delilah imagined Janice mocking her. “You think you’re the only one who knows how to play the game? I can hire people too.”

“Enough!” Laurie’s voice rang out like a whip, cutting through the tension. Years of ruling the Edwards family had given her words the force of law, and in an instant, the room quieted. “Delilah would never stoop to plagiarism. The earlier incident was nothing more than a setup—someone deliberately trying to ruin her reputation.”

“Mrs. Edwards, you’re the face of the Edwards family. I’d suggest you choose your words carefully,” Janice retorted smoothly, flicking her hair back with practiced grace. “After all, wasn’t Delilah’s plagiarism already proven during the clothing design competition? Are you really going to drag your family’s name through the mud just to protect her?”

Laurie’s face twisted in a mix of sorrow and frustration as she stared at Janice. “What happened to you? You used to be so obedient, so well-behaved. And now—”

“Now I’ve learned better,” Janice shot back, her voice biting and cold. “I used to bend over backward for your approval, enduring all your insults and disrespect. But not anymore. What did I learn? That the Edwards family is full of arrogant, self-important fools. I can’t believe I wasted all that time trying to get your approval. If I could, I’d slap myself for ever caring.”

Janice’s words hit Laurie like a punch to the gut. She staggered, her heart racing in her chest.

For the first time, doubts began to gnaw at her. Why had they treated Janice like that? Why had it been so easy to cast her aside without a second thought?

The questions gnawed at Laurie’s mind, like claws scraping at her insides, leaving her drenched in a cold sweat. But she quickly shook off the unsettling thoughts, unwilling to face truths she wasn’t ready to confront.

“Janice! You and JE are so tight. Don’t think I don’t know this was all your scheme!” Laurie hissed, venom dripping from her words. “You set Delilah up just to watch her...”

“Fall. You’re jealous of anyone who outshines you. We never should’ve taken you back. We should’ve let you fend for yourself out there.”

“Mrs. Edwards, don’t you think not bringing Janice back would’ve been the kinder choice for her?” Sierra interrupted, tilting her head with faux innocence in her voice. “With her talent, she could’ve made it anywhere. And don’t forget, she’s JE’s best friend. Ever heard of JE Consortium? Compared to them, your family is nothing but a mere speck of dust.”

Laurie's face drained of color as Sierra's words sliced through her composure like a razor-sharp blade.

The crowd went wild. "The Edwards family thinks they're untouchable just because they're one of Efrery's top four? Please. Compared to JE Consortium, they're a drop in the ocean."

"Janice is JE's best friend. Everyone knows JE is fiercely loyal to her friends. With JE around, Janice can have whatever she wants. The Edwards family just kicked Janice out like that. What a joke!"

Chapter 275:

"This is just the biggest mistake of the year." The whispers and sneers crowded in on Laurie, each one heavier than the last, making it hard to breathe. The pressure of days filled with stress and humiliation had already stretched her to her breaking point. Now, standing there while the crowd mocked her family, it felt like the floor beneath her was falling away.

Her vision swam, her legs gave out, and before anyone could react, Laurie crumpled to the floor.

"Mom, are you okay?" Delilah cried out, rushing forward to steady Laurie. She spun around to face Janice with a mix of panic and fury. "Janice, what on earth was that for?"

"What did I do?" Janice met Delilah's glare with icy calm. "Was it wrong of me to tell the truth? Or perhaps you'd prefer I kept quiet about your little plagiarism stunt? Oh, and by the way, ever think that her fainting might have something to do with that 'deadly oath' you swore? Funny how karma works, isn't it?"

Delilah's face turned ashen, her composure slipping like sand through her fingers. Janice's boldness had her cornered, leaving her at a loss for words.

"What's all this commotion about?" A cool, crisp voice cut through the tension like a blade.

Everyone froze and turned to see Leah, draped in a striking crimson gown that clung to her figure as if it were made for this moment. Her makeup was dramatic, her presence magnetic, and the commanding aura she radiated was enough to make people instinctively step aside.

Delilah's stomach dropped. Of all people, it had to be Leah Sugden, head of Freak Design. If Leah caught wind of what had just gone down, her career could be over before she could even plead her case.

"Ms. Sugden, my mom fainted," Delilah blurted, her voice a mix of desperation and false composure. "I need to take her to the hospital."

"Fainted?" Leah arched a perfectly sculpted brow, her expression one of mild curiosity laced with amusement. "Really? And what, pray tell, caused her to faint?"

Delilah blinked, momentarily stunned. Why wasn't Leah urging her to rush Laurie to the hospital? Instead, she stood there, cool as a cucumber, asking questions as though she had all the time in the world.

"She..." Delilah stammered, struggling to form a coherent response.

"She was provoked," Sierra chimed in, flashing a saccharine smile. "Oh, Leah, you wouldn't believe it! Delilah went and swore this oath—something about her family dying if these people turned out to be her accomplices. And lo and behold, her mother was so shocked she passed out right on the spot!"

"Really?" Leah's eyes narrowed, her tone dripping with icy sarcasm as she fixed Delilah with a piercing stare. "So, let me get this straight. You hired these people, and your mother paid the price."

"No, that's not it!" Delilah shook her head frantically, the words tumbling out in a rush. "These people attacked my mom verbally! She fainted because she was furious, not because of anything I did!"

Leah folded her arms across her chest, her lips curling into a playful smirk as she kept her eyes fixed on Delilah. "Well then, why don't you enlighten me about what was said that got her so riled up?"

Delilah hesitated, her eyes darting from Janice to Sierra before finally settling back on Leah.

Chapter 276:

Were they all in on this together?

The pieces started falling into place like a puzzle finally taking shape.

Janice and JE were tight, and JE was also chummy with Leah—naturally, the three of them were thick as thieves. And with Sierra casually calling Leah by her first name earlier? It all lined up. This whole mess, the trap she and Laurie found themselves tangled in, had their fingerprints all over it.

“Ms. Sugden, what’s going on here?” Kenneth noticed the brewing tension and strode over to intervene.

The moment Delilah’s eyes landed on him, her tears flowed freely, spilling over in dramatic torrents as she burst into sobs.

Kenneth furrowed his brow, perplexed by her outburst. But Delilah offered no explanations—just more tears.

The less she said, the better. Explanations only muddled the waters; her tears would let Kenneth’s imagination run wild and do the heavy lifting for her.

“Get Delilah and her mother to the hospital,” Kenneth ordered briskly, unwilling to let the scene derail the exhibition. He motioned for the bodyguards to escort them out promptly.

“Mr. Delgado, shouldn’t you get to the bottom of this before making a call?” Leah interjected, her voice calm but edged with steel.

Kenneth shook his head, his demeanor as cool as a cucumber. “Right or wrong, this isn’t the time or place. The exhibition comes first, and I won’t have it derailed.” Leah raised a brow, her eyes flicking towards Janice for her input.

Janice gave a subtle nod of her head—a silent warning for Leah to pick her battles wisely. Now wasn’t the moment to lock horns with Kenneth.

“You’re right. The exhibition comes first,” Leah said with a casual shrug before turning to the crowd. “Ladies and gentlemen, my apologies for the disruption. I hope this little...”

“Hiccup doesn’t dampen your enjoyment of the exhibition. To make it up to you, I’ll be treating everyone to the finest desserts and wine later. At Freak Design, we have zero tolerance for plagiarism. To maintain the integrity of this exhibition, all items connected to Delilah will be removed immediately.”

Kenneth’s expression soured, his eyes narrowing as his gaze grew more intense, locking firmly on Leah.

But Leah paid him no mind, her focus unwavering as she signaled to security to remove Delilah’s jewelry without hesitation.

“Ms. Sugden, isn’t this against the rules?” Kenneth finally stepped forward, his voice sharp as he moved to intervene and halt the security.

Leah arched an eyebrow and asked coldly, “Mr. Delgado, can you specify what’s against the rules here?” Her question was pointed, instantly heightening the room’s tension.

“In any case, Delilah works under Delgado Jewelry,” Kenneth’s face clouded over. Despite Leah’s challenge, he maintained his stance, his voice carrying a cold command. “Any disciplinary measures fall within our responsibility, not yours.”

The tension in the air thickened as the two of them locked eyes.

Leah’s look sharpened, her aura chilling, while Kenneth stood resolute, his demeanor unyielding, exuding the impenetrable authority of a fortress.

Chapter 277:

Spectators exchanged suspicious looks. A confrontation between these two powerhouses threatened to interfere with the entire event.

Nonetheless, many sided with Kenneth. As CEO of Delgado Jewelry, protecting the firm’s prestige and asserting control over internal affairs was his prerogative. Leah’s interference seemed to damage not just Delgado Jewelry but Kenneth’s leadership as well.

If word of this got out, Delgado Jewelry's reputation could be permanently damaged, and even worse, it could break the trust among its employees.

"Ms. Sugden." At the height of the tension, Janice intervened. She placed a reassuring hand on Leah's shoulder, and Leah's cold demeanor eased. "Delilah's oversight is the responsibility of Delgado Jewelry. We will address this internally. Your involvement isn't necessary."

Janice's intervention was gifted, reaffirming Delgado Jewelry's independence while providing Leah with an honorable retreat.

The audience's focus shifted to Janice, their admiration evident.

Although she was introduced only as a designer, the composure and authority she carried were equal to that of Leah and Kenneth.

Standing beside Leah, Janice didn't just stand her ground, she seemed to effortlessly attract the limelight, subtly overshadowing Leah.

"What's your response, Mr. Delgado?" Janice turned to face Kenneth, holding his gaze with a steady look.

Kenneth paused, momentarily uncertain, but soon saw the prudence in her approach. Recognizing that this was not the moment to distance Freak Design, he nodded in agreement.

"Are you really excusing Delilah's actions?" Leah asked Janice.

"Absolutely not," Janice replied, shaking her head before redirecting her attention to Kenneth. "Freak Design stands firmly against plagiarism, as do we. Delgado Jewelry is committed to justice. Once Delilah's wrongdoing is verified, we'll provide the necessary clarifications to both Freak Design and the public."

Faced with Janice's certain position, Kenneth found himself compelled to adopt her perspective. To do otherwise would risk appearing small-minded and unprofessional.

“Ms. Sugden, I assure you, we will investigate this thoroughly. Delgado Jewelry does not favor plagiarism, and as a precaution, we will remove Delilah’s work from the exhibition.”

“Good,” Leah responded, her expression reflecting her approval of the resolution.

The tense crowd exhaled in collective relief. The feared disruption had been adeptly avoided, preserving the collaboration between Delgado Jewelry and Freak Design. For many attendees, this partnership was a crucial chance to engage with Freak Design. Any public conflict could have had catastrophic repercussions.

As she prepared to leave, Leah gave Janice a playful wink. Then she exited the room with a confident swivel of her hips.

Shortly thereafter, Delilah’s “Starlit Dreams” was removed, and the display case now featured another piece of jewelry from Delgado Jewelry.

“Thanks for stepping in earlier,” Kenneth said, relief apparent on his handsome face as he thanked Janice. “Without your intervention, I might have ended up in a confrontation with Ms. Sugden over our brand’s reputation.”

Chapter 278:

A slight smile touched Janice’s lips, her demeanor composed as if her actions were merely routine. “It was the least I could do, Mr. Delgado. As part of Delgado Jewelry, it’s my duty to safeguard our interests. But be wary of Ms. Sugden; she tends to hold grudges.”

Kenneth paused, then let out a wry laugh. “Being on the bad side of someone as capable and attractive as Ms. Sugden might not be the worst thing.”

Janice gave a playful eye roll. While Kenneth took it lightly, she knew the trouble Leah could cause if she really targeted him. She was familiar with Leah’s volatile nature. Leah behaved more tamely around her, but others often saw her more challenging side.

“But tell me, since you’re friends with her, isn’t it a bit off to speak about her this way behind her back?” Kenneth changed the topic, eyeing Janice with a touch of skepticism.

With a casual shrug, Janice responded, “I thought it was only fair to give you a heads-up, seeing as you’re a good person.”

Caught off guard by her rationale, Kenneth pressed his lips together, momentarily lost for words. He pondered further, wondering about Janice’s true identity. Was she merely a close associate of JE and a friend to Leah? Or was there more, given Leah’s unusual deference to her?

This curiosity added a layer of complexity to his interactions with Janice, leaving him with a lingering sense of unease. Janice had been ostracized by the Edwards family, leaving her with minimal resources. Apart from her current backing from the Green family, what could possibly make Leah regard her with such reverence? Leah’s respect seemed disproportionate, considering Janice’s friendship with JE.

“Kenneth, really, if you want to show gratitude towards Janice, you should just fire Delilah,” Sierra chimed in sharply. “Delilah’s just troublesome. She never gets anything right but always stirs up problems for you.”

Kenneth gave Sierra a resigned look.

Kenneth looked at Sierra, his expression serious. “I know there’s tension between Janice and Delilah. But as CEO, I need to get to the bottom of things before making such decisions.”

Sierra’s frown deepened, her impatience evident. “What is there to dig up? Delilah is a repeat offender. It’s likely that ‘Starlit Dreams’ is either plagiarized or ghostwritten. Given her mediocre talent, how could she produce something genuinely impressive?”

Kenneth harbored similar suspicions. He had reviewed Delilah’s past designs, noting their erratic quality and lack of a unifying style. A true designer, like Janice, always maintained a distinct, sophisticated signature filled with innovation. Yet, caught up in the recent exhibition’s demands, he hadn’t had the chance to probe further, even as Delilah stirred controversy and clashed with Leah. It was clear a thorough investigation was necessary.

“Let’s not be too harsh on Kenneth, Sierra,” Janice interjected, patting Sierra’s shoulder. “He will handle the situation with Delilah, in due course. Remember, he went out on a limb to bring you into Delgado Jewelry.”

Kenneth turned to Janice, somewhat taken aback. “You knew about that?”

Janice offered a subtle smile in response. “I was just speculating.”

Chapter 279:

Sierra, the subject of their conversation, tilted her head, puzzled. “What are you both discussing? I’m lost. Kenneth, has my mom been causing issues?”

“No, your mom hasn’t been causing issues.” Kenneth gave a slight smile and patted Sierra’s head. “I just let her know that you would be coming here to gain some experience. I’m sure she won’t object, considering the Delgado family’s reputation.”

“Kenneth, promise you’ll tell me if my mom or sister cause any issues,” Sierra said, her tone serious. “I can’t bear the thought of you facing problems on my account.”

“There’s no need to worry.” With a gentle smile, Kenneth reassured her and then turned his attention to Janice. Catching his gaze, Janice nodded and addressed Sierra. “Let’s take a moment to really engage with our work and savor the exhibition.”

“Yeah. We’ve been so caught up in the preparations that we’ve hardly had a moment to admire the jewelry.” The two strolled off, blending into the bustling crowd, while Kenneth’s gaze remained fixed on Janice.

Maybe this was the true magic of Janice. Sierra, who was always so guarded and rebellious, had somehow come to trust Janice completely, even though they had known each other for only a short time. It was truly surprising. He knew just how difficult it was to break through Sierra’s defenses. He had only earned her trust years ago, after an unexpected event in their childhood.

Kenneth exhaled a weary sigh, pulling his thoughts back to the present. There was no use dwelling on bygone days—it was time to look ahead.

At that moment, his phone buzzed. Kenneth checked it, his expression growing concerned.

The message was from Lowell. Instead of defending Delilah like he normally would, he said, "Fire Delilah. As your friend, I don't want to see her cause you any trouble." The message was extremely odd. The sudden change in Lowell's stance made Kenneth wonder if his account had been hacked.

Not long ago, Lowell had begged him to give Delilah a chance at Delgado Jewelry. Yet now, he was asking for her to be fired.

"Interesting," Kenneth muttered as he tucked his phone into his pocket and turned his attention back to the exhibition.

Despite the distraction, the event continued seamlessly. The jewelry on display drew nothing but praise, and pre-orders from high-profile socialites were pouring in.

The joint exhibition was already proving to be a tremendous success, and Kenneth was determined to celebrate it with the team afterward.

Meanwhile, Laurie had regained consciousness in the hospital.

"Mom, how are you doing?" Delilah asked with concern. "If anything feels wrong or uncomfortable, please let me know. I'll call the doctor right away."

"I'm fine," Laurie said with a tired sigh, her eyes drifting aimlessly around the room. "Is it just you here?"

"As soon as you were brought in, I let everyone know," Delilah answered without hesitation. "Dad is busy with work and couldn't get away. Carman and Dotson are already on their way."

Laurie's chest tightened as she listened. Despite Delilah's attempts to reassure her, something still felt incomplete. Whenever she was unwell in the past, Janice would take care of her meticulously.

Chapter 280:

On the other hand, Delilah seemed attentive, but her care seemed shallow, lacking depth. Since she had woken up, Delilah hadn't even considered offering her a glass of water.

When Delilah saw Laurie staring at the glass, her heart sank. "Mom? Is everything okay?" she asked, her panic rising as she hurried to get the water.

"I'm so sorry, Mom! I was so worried about you that I completely forgot." With teary eyes and her familiar look of innocence, Delilah handed Laurie the glass. "Please drink some water."

Frustrated, Laurie pushed the glass away irritably. "Delilah, I need to be alone for a while."

As Laurie turned away, her mind began to spin. The doubts she had tried so hard to suppress were creeping back. Despite her best efforts to ignore them, the voice in her head kept nagging, insisting she face the uncomfortable truth she had been avoiding for so long.

Delilah didn't walk away; instead, she grasped Laurie's hands firmly. "Mom, are you wondering how Janice could act so heartlessly? Though she's cut ties with us, she's still part of our family by blood. It's awful how she behaves."

Laurie tried to speak, her voice faltering before she ultimately shut her eyes in defeat.

Delilah's brow furrowed in confusion at her reaction. Shouldn't Laurie be outraged at Janice, eager to join her in condemning her? It appeared Laurie was trying to avoid something.

"Mom, I don't think I can remain at Delgado Jewelry after this," Delilah said, her tone filled with sorrow. "I've given my all, and Janice still won't leave me alone."

Laurie reopened her eyes and let out a weary sigh. "She only joined Delgado Jewelry to target you. As long as you're there, she'll pursue you relentlessly, like a predator on the hunt."

"Mom, am I destined to avoid Janice forever?" Delilah's voice was fraught with frustration and a sense of injustice as she tightened her grip. "Is the Edwards family really so powerless against her?"

With a sad smile, Laurie shook her head. "Janice has the Green family's support and is friends with JE. If it comes down to a confrontation, we can't match her."

She stroked Delilah's hair soothingly. "Believe me, we'll find another route to success. We don't need to confront her at Delgado Jewelry."

Yet Delilah resisted this idea. She was supposed to be the pride of the Edwards family, destined for protection and prominence. Now, the very person who had been cast out by the family was dominating over her.

"Mom, what if the Green family cuts ties with Janice?"

"What do you mean?" Laurie's expression was marked by confusion as she gazed at Delilah.

"Mom, is everything alright?" Just then, Carman burst into the room. His face filled with concern when he saw Laurie reclined in the hospital bed. "Who's responsible for this? They won't get off easily."

Laurie was about to dismiss the concern, but Delilah quickly intervened. "Carman, it was Janice."

"What?" Carman's face contorted with shock and rage.

"That despicable woman hurt you, Mom? She will regret it," Carman fumed.