

Wrath 291

Chapter 291:

Janice caught his meaning instantly, a knowing smile playing across her face. “Of course. It’s about upholding the Green family’s reputation, avoiding any whispers that might arise from unnecessary interactions with men.”

Aiden remained silent, but satisfaction flickered across his features, his relaxed posture unchanged.

Following Aiden’s directive, they secured the services of an elite female makeup artist for Janice.

Though the beautification process could test anyone’s patience, Aiden remained a steadfast presence throughout, never betraying even a hint of restlessness. The fitting assistants found themselves stealing furtive glances at him. His usually stern expression had softened, occasionally giving way to glimpses of genuine curiosity as he observed the intricate makeup process.

His puzzlement was particularly evident at certain steps—the enhancement of Janice’s already perfect double eyelids, or the peculiar ritual of concealing her naturally rosy lips only to paint them anew.

The fitting assistants exchanged furtive glances, their disbelief palpable. Could this composed gentleman before them truly be Aiden Green, whose very name struck terror into the hearts of many?

Though bound to a wheelchair, Aiden’s reputation painted him as a man of volatile temper and merciless actions. Those who had crossed paths with Green Group or attempted to undermine him had learned the cost of their mistakes through devastating losses.

Darker whispers spoke of a man who amplified his misfortunes into weapons, claiming the river in Efrery held the remains of countless souls who had dared to slight him.

“It’s done.”

The makeup artist’s voice yanked them from their spiraling thoughts.

The fitting assistants turned to Janice, their eyes growing wide with admiration.

“Mrs. Green, you’re absolutely stunning! You look like a goddess.”

“Oh my! Mrs. Green, you were already breathtaking in that gown, but now with the makeup and styling, you’re simply radiant.”

The assistants, well-versed in the art of flattery, couldn’t contain their stream of praise for Janice.

A gentle smile graced Janice’s lips as she rose and turned to Aiden. Her fluid movement seemed to catch at his heart, his Adam’s apple bobbing in response.

“Aiden, what do you think?” she asked, her smile light.

Aiden drew a deep breath, steadying the flutter in his chest. “Not bad.”

“Only not bad?” Janice crossed her arms with a touch of exasperation. “If Aiden isn’t satisfied, perhaps the makeup artist’s skills aren’t quite up to par. Then...”

The makeup artist froze, her face draining of color.

Having devoted her utmost effort to perfecting Janice’s appearance, the makeup artist felt her heart sink at Aiden’s tepid response. Would she be the next to vanish beneath the river’s surface?

“This will do,” Aiden said again, and the makeup artist sagged with relief, silent prayers of gratitude filling her mind.

“Time is running out. We should get going.” Aiden glanced at the time.

Janice's lips curved upward. "Alright. If you think it's fine, then let's go with it."

Draped in the ethereal Cloud, Janice radiated celestial beauty, her elegant makeup enhancing her natural grace like starlight catching on morning dew. Beside her, Aiden cut a striking figure in his dark tailcoat—his wheelchair doing nothing to diminish the commanding presence that seemed to emanate from his very being.

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As they made their entrance into Delgado Jewelry's celebration banquet, time seemed to pause, as if a scene from an enchanted tale had sprung to life before the guests' eyes.

The assembled crowd fell into an awestruck hush, their collective breath caught in their throats.

"Wow, Janice! You look gorgeous!" Sierra burst forward from the crowd, her excitement bubbling over as she clasped Janice's hands in wonder. "For a moment, I truly believed a fairy had graced us with her presence, only to discover it was you, Janice!"

"You certainly haven't lost your gift for flattery." Leah approached, commanding attention in a black evening gown that captured the night sky itself, each star-like sparkle emphasizing her presence. Her striking makeup, bold and fierce, typically created an invisible barrier that kept others at a respectful distance. Yet as she took her place beside Janice, her intimidating aura seemed to melt away.

The stark contrast left onlookers whispering among themselves, their expressions a mixture of disbelief and curiosity. How was it possible that Leah, the formidable CEO of Freak Design, could turn so naturally into what appeared to be Janice's devoted follower?

Wasn't Janice cast out of the Edwards family? Even with the considerable influence of the Green family and her connection to JE, surely it shouldn't warrant such deference from someone of Leah's status.

“Leah, you look stunning today too.” Sierra’s warm compliment broke through the murmurs. She, too, had dressed up for the occasion, trading her usual playful charm for an air of sophisticated grace. “One of you is a goddess, the other an enchantress. You two are simply stunning.”

“Sierra, you really know how to sweet-talk, don’t you?” Leah exhaled softly, shooting a resigned glance at Janice. “At this rate, she’ll steal my position before long.”

A playful smirk crossed Janice’s face. “Your status does seem rather precarious.”

The comment caught Leah off guard, genuine concern flickering across her features. What had started as a lighthearted jest suddenly felt like a warning bell in her mind.

There was a time when Leah had been unmatched in her ability to delight Janice with well-placed compliments. But now, with this newcomer’s silver tongue, her special place felt threatened.

Catching Leah’s flicker of worry, Janice reached out and gently flicked her forehead. “What’s going on in that head of yours? You know you could never be replaced.”

Leah rubbed her forehead with a frown, but warmth bloomed in her chest.

That playful flick was their thing—something Janice had never shared with Sierra.

It was proof enough that Janice spoke true: her place was secure.

“All this praise floating around, you must be feeling left out,” Janice mused, casting a sideways glance at Aiden.

Sierra jumped at the opening, flashing her sweetest smile in Aiden’s direction. “Aiden, you’re looking particularly dashing today. You and Janice are the perfect match.”

While the initial compliment barely registered, the latter observation tugged the corners of Aiden’s mouth into the faintest of smiles.

“Well, well! The stoic CEO actually cracking a smile?” Leah pounced on his reaction, her eyes twinkling with mischief. “Aiden, you’re quite pleased hearing that you and Janice make the perfect pair, aren’t you? Those rumors must be wrong after all. It looks like this marriage runs deeper than anyone thought.”

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Janice’s eyebrow arched sharply as she shot Leah a warning glare. What was she thinking, bringing up such a delicate topic? Wasn’t this just an attempt to make Aiden uncomfortable?

But Aiden remained unruffled, his composure perfect as still water. “Ms. Sugden, I never expected the CEO of Freak Design to be such an enthusiastic gossip. I must say, I’m impressed.”

“Come on.” Leah waved her hand dismissively, unfazed. “Even CEOs are human. Show me a woman who doesn’t enjoy a bit of gossip now and then.”

Aiden’s eyes narrowed thoughtfully as understanding dawned. Now he could see why Leah and Janice got along so well. They were both masterminds who played by their own rulebook.

“Sierra, come here.” The icy command shattered their pleasant atmosphere like glass.

Sierra’s heart skipped a beat as she turned to the voice, meeting Nellie’s frost-laden stare. “Nellie, why are you here?”

Nellie advanced, her face dark with displeasure. “This is Delgado Jewelry’s celebration banquet. Kenneth extended me an invitation. Is that a problem?”

Sierra flinched as understanding dawned—their mother’s matchmaking schemes between Nellie and Kenneth. “Did Mom come too?” she ventured, forcing a brittle smile.

“So you do remember we have a mother?” Nellie’s words dripped with venom as she crossed her arms, her stance radiating hostility. “She was starting to think all your gallivanting about had wiped her from your memory.”

“Nellie, you—”

“Well, if a mother can be so easily forgotten, perhaps she wasn’t much of a mother to begin with.” Leah’s voice cut through the tension like a silk-wrapped blade. “After all, what kind of mother sends people to drag her daughter back home like some common criminal?”

Nellie’s eyes flared with indignation, but she quickly reined in her temper, reminding herself of Leah’s influential standing. “Ms. Sugden, this is a family matter. Perhaps you’d be better off staying out of it, don’t you think?”

“Meddling in things that aren’t my business is something of a specialty of mine,” Leah quipped, stepping closer to Sierra like a guardian angel in heels. “Besides, Sierra’s my friend. What kind of friend would I be if I didn’t have her back?”

“Leah...” Sierra’s eyes brimmed with tears, her heart swelling with gratitude. Leah’s unwavering support was like a balm to her battered spirit.

Yet her joy was tinged with sorrow. How ironic that the warmth she craved from her own sister came instead from someone else.

“Don’t fret, Sierra. And as long as I’m here, no one—not even your sister—gets to push you around.” Leah gently tousled Sierra’s hair, her smile a soft ray of sunshine on a cloudy day.

The interplay wasn’t lost on Nellie. She noticed the way Sierra’s eyes shone with trust when they met Leah’s, and it stoked a fire of jealousy and frustration.

“Sierra, I demand you come here this instant.”

“No!” Sierra’s voice trembled at first, but she quickly steadied herself. “I’ve chosen my own path. I refuse to return to that glittering prison you call life. If gilded cages are your preference, so be it, but leave me out of it.”

“You’ve really turned your back on me, haven’t you?” Nellie’s narrowed eyes glinted like ice, her presence exuding an ominous chill that once had the power to reduce Sierra to a quivering mess.

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But not today. With Leah, Janice, and even Aiden around, Sierra felt like a bird newly freed from its cage.

“Nellie, I’m not turning against you. I’m simply standing up for myself. I’m done being your shadow.”

Seeing Sierra’s determination and confidence, Nellie understood it was Janice and Leah’s influence.

She knew she couldn’t afford to be too forceful in front of the crowd, but backing down now would mean losing face—not just for herself, but for the entire Ramirez family.

“Ladies, could we please just let this go?” Out of nowhere, Kenneth stepped in, attempting to smooth things over.

Today, he looked every bit the picture of elegance, dressed in a crisp white suit—a stark contrast to Aiden’s more somber attire.

“This is Delgado Jewelry’s celebration banquet,” Kenneth added, his voice calm and measured. “If you keep this up, it’ll put me in a tough spot as the host.”

Nellie gave Kenneth a fleeting glance, her chin lifted in a haughty gesture. “Fine. For your sake, Kenneth, I’ll hold off on the argument. Sierra, don’t get too comfortable. Just because you have their support doesn’t mean you get to call the shots. No matter what, as long as you carry the Ramirez blood, you’ll always have to play by the family’s rules.”

A wave of dizziness washed over Sierra, the weight of Nellie’s words pressing down on her.

As a Ramirez, Sierra couldn’t escape her bloodline—no matter how far she ran, the family could reel her back in at any moment.

Just as the suffocating feeling threatened to overwhelm her, a warm hand clasped hers, sending a soothing wave through her body.

Looking up, Sierra met Janice’s steady, reassuring gaze. “Janice...”

“There’s always a way,” Janice said with a soft smile, her voice a balm for Sierra’s turmoil. “We weren’t born to live for the family or anyone else. We live for ourselves.”

Those simple, grounded words seemed to calm the storm in Sierra’s heart.

“Thank you. I will fight for my own happiness, no matter what.”

From the sidelines, Nellie narrowed her eyes, frustrated. She had nearly broken Sierra’s resolve, but Janice had managed to pull her back from the edge.

It seemed her instincts were right. Janice was the real problem here. If she could get rid of Janice, everything would fall back into place. Sierra would make her way back to the Ramirez family, and Aiden...

Nellie stole a quick glance at Aiden but was immediately jolted by the chilling intensity of his gaze.

His look struck her like a freezing wave, as if she were falling into an endless, icy abyss.

It was a silent warning.

For a fleeting second, Nellie had the strangest sensation that Aiden could take her life with nothing more than that icy stare.

It was terrifying, yet... exhilarating.

A man like that—intimidating, relentless, unapologetically domineering—was exactly the kind of man who would be worthy of her.

“Nellie, let me introduce you to some friends.” Sensing the tension in the air, Kenneth gave a subtle nod toward Janice and ushered Nellie away.

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As they walked off, Leah clicked her tongue, her eyes twinkling with amusement. “Janice, did you catch that? Nellie’s gaze was a little unsettling.”

Janice had noticed it too, and it was clear as day that Nellie’s gaze was aimed squarely at Aiden.

“What’s the matter?” Noticing Janice’s gaze, Aiden turned to her, a faint smirk tugging at his lips. “Her eyes are on her face. If she feels like staring at me, what am I supposed to do—pluck them out?”

“I didn’t say a word,” Janice retorted, rolling her eyes with an exaggerated flair, her tone dripping with mock innocence.

Aiden let out a snort. “Sure, you didn’t say a word, but your eyes were practically screaming it.”

Janice was struck speechless. Could Aiden decipher her thoughts just by looking into her eyes? The idea was utterly ridiculous.

Leah nudged Sierra playfully and whispered, “Did you notice that? Those two are totally flirting. One’s clueless, and the other’s pretending not to notice. Honestly, they’re a match made in heaven.”

“Exactly!” Sierra’s eyes sparkled with agreement, as if she’d just found a kindred spirit. “I’ve always thought the same, but I never had anyone to share it with. Leah, you’re officially my confidant now.”

“Well, I know Janice inside out.” Leah chuckled, folding her arms smugly. “I can read her like a book—one glance, one smile, and I know what’s ticking in that head of hers. But now there’s someone else who can do the same.”

“Aiden?”

“Precisely.”

The two exchanged a conspiratorial grin, the kind that only true partners-in-crime could share.

They didn’t need words to enjoy the moment, quietly savoring the thrill of being unnoticed spectators to the unfolding drama.

Just then, Sierra’s gaze flickered to the entrance, her brow furrowing. “Delilah? But wasn’t she fired? What’s she doing here at the celebration banquet?”

Delilah graced the celebration in full regalia, her makeup flawless, carrying herself with the poise of a seasoned debutante as a subtle smile played across her lips. The sight of her self-assurance sent a wave of irritation coursing through Sierra’s veins.

"I've seen my fair share of brazen individuals, but this truly takes the cake. She's been fired, yet here she is, bold as brass, attending the celebration party?"

Cheryl approached Delilah, her face brightening with a welcoming smile. "You made it, Delilah."

"Hi," Delilah acknowledged her with a nod, offering a smile that carried equal measures of resignation and apology. "Even though I've been let go, and I know my presence at the celebration might raise eyebrows, I couldn't stay away. I desperately wanted to witness everyone's moment of triumph. All those late nights we spent together, burning the midnight oil—I couldn't bear to miss this milestone. So here I am, uninvited..."

"You want to see our happy faces?" Sierra cut through the air between them, her voice sharp as winter frost. "The mere sight of you makes my blood boil."

"And fills me with utter disdain," Leah interjected, her eyes dancing with malicious amusement as she sized up Delilah.

Cheryl's initial impulse to defend Delilah against Sierra's barbs died in her throat when Leah joined the fray. The memory of Delilah's transgression against Leah suddenly loomed large in her mind.

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Speaking up now would be like walking into a minefield. Though she worked for Delgado Jewelry, who knew what complaints might reach Kenneth's ears through Leah?

"I just remembered some pressing matters that need my attention. I should go." Cheryl cast an apologetic glance at Delilah before making her hasty retreat.

"Why did she leave?" Leah's lips curved into a smirk as she lifted a glass of crimson wine from a passing waiter's tray. "And here I was, anticipating such a touching display of sisterly solidarity."

Delilah's teeth grazed her lower lip as her fingers twisted in the fabric of her dress, her features etched with barely concealed hurt. "Ms. Sugden, I'm well aware of your considerable influence, and how your empire stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Delgado Jewelry. But this remains Delgado Jewelry's

celebration banquet. While your disdain for me is clear as crystal, you can't compel me to leave this place."

"Hold on a moment!" Leah's hands flew up in a theatrical display of innocence. "Did those words ever cross my lips? Did I once suggest you should leave?"

A smile tinged with sorrow played across Delilah's face. "Weren't all those barbed comments designed to drive me away?"

Leah shook her head, amusement glinting in her eyes. Though she had to admit Delilah's performance of wounded innocence while weaving her manipulative web showed promise, it was still like watching a novice attempt sleight of hand before a seasoned magician.

"By your implications, I've somehow morphed into the villain of this celebration, an outsider hurling cruel barbs at an innocent victim."

The surrounding guests had begun to gravitate toward their exchange, their faces a canvas of confusion and barely concealed curiosity.

Delilah masterfully continued her performance, tears welling in her expertly made-up eyes, crafting an image of perfect vulnerability. Her carefully applied makeup—subtle and sweet—only served to heighten the illusion of guileless innocence.

"That wasn't my intention, Ms. Sugden." Delilah drew in a measured breath, as if wrestling with inner turmoil. "I simply ask that, without concrete evidence of any wrongdoing on my part, you extend me the basic courtesy of respect."

Her words rippled through the gathering crowd, painting broad strokes of understanding across their faces.

"Isn't she Delilah Edwards? Word is she was dismissed. What business does she have here?"

“You said it yourself. She’s from the Edwards family, which has some ties to the Delgado family. Her presence at this celebration hardly raises an eyebrow.”

“Gee! I heard she’s a plagiarist, the very one who ignited Ms. Sugden’s fury at the exhibition. Delgado Jewelry, the crown jewel of original design, could see its pristine reputation tarnished beyond repair with such a questionable element in their design department.”

“Stop spreading rumors! The investigation’s wheels are still turning, and not a single thread of concrete evidence points to her plagiarizing anything.”

Whispers filled the air—some voices cast blame on Delilah, while others spoke in her defense, with many attendees merely enjoying the unfolding spectacle.

Off to one side, Aiden and Janice could be seen together, each with a glass of red wine in hand. They seemed utterly at ease, a stark contrast to the tense atmosphere around them.

“Aiden, what do you think Delilah’s doing here?” Janice swirled her wine, her voice a mix of calm and curiosity. Delilah’s decision to attend the event was questionable at best.

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For her, the event only held a couple of grim possibilities—either facing harsh criticism from the other guests or receiving outright rejection from the staff of Delgado Jewelry. In either scenario, she risked public embarrassment.

Yet, she must have had her reasons for appearing.

Leaning back, Aiden’s posture relaxed but alert, his eyes sparking with keen interest. “Her reasons for being here don’t concern me much. But if I were to guess? It’s probably because of you.”

“Because of me?” Janice’s eyebrow arched, followed by a dismissive chuckle. “It seems she hasn’t learned her lesson yet—eager for more embarrassment, apparently.”

She didn’t need to intervene, as the drama escalated on its own.

Leah poured her wine over Delilah's head. Delilah stood frozen, her mouth open in disbelief, her eyes locked on Leah.

Confronted by Leah's imposing figure, Delilah was unable to voice any objection, her shock rendering her immobile. Without Janice there to keep her in check, Leah's aggressive attitude took over. The atmosphere in the room grew even heavier, the spectators holding their breath in anticipation of Leah's next move.

"Wipe that disgusting act off your face. You might fool some with your innocent act, but I see right through it," Leah sneered, her words sharp enough to cut. "You're here to garner sympathy, aren't you? Hoping someone will defend you so you can manipulate the story and leverage public pity for a comeback. Well, you're mistaken. No one's falling for that act any longer."

"Absolutely!" Sierra chimed in. "Delilah, is this tired act all you've got? If you can't bring anything fresh to the table, perhaps it's time you crawl back from where you came and rethink your strategy for a few years!"

She thrust her fist in the air in mock intimidation.

As Janice took a leisurely sip of her wine, a smirk played upon her lips, amused by the unfolding drama.

Leah and Sierra, a formidable pair, were in perfect harmony as bullies. Their combined assault was a seamless display of ruthlessness, leaving Delilah utterly overwhelmed.

"Why do you insist on tormenting me?" Delilah pleaded, her voice breaking as her wet hair clung to her forehead and tears started to spill from her eyes. She appeared completely shattered.

Her face, wet with tears, conveyed a deep sense of injustice. "I just came to see everyone..."

"Attention, all Delgado Jewelry staff!" Leah interrupted, clapping her hands sharply.

The employees looked around, bewildered, yet they slowly gathered around Leah. Cheryl, in particular, seemed hesitant as she moved closer.

“It seems Miss Edwards here just wanted to catch up with everyone.” A sly smile played on Leah’s lips as she surveyed the crowd.

Delilah’s face drained of color, realizing Leah’s intention to escalate the situation by drawing an audience for her humiliation.

Curiosity drew even more onlookers, as other guests, alerted by the noise, joined the circle, their faces eager with anticipation.

“Miss Edwards, take a look around. Everyone’s gathered just for you.” Leah waved her hand toward the crowd with a teasing smile. “If this crowd isn’t impressive enough, maybe I should have them parade around for a better show.”

Delilah’s complexion drained to a ghostly white. Surrounded by so many staring eyes, she felt like the center of a cruel joke.

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Suddenly, Janice laughed. She covered her mouth with a hand, her eyes sparkling mischievously. With flawless makeup and natural elegance, she shone with an unmatched radiance.

Aiden’s attention was completely captured; Janice’s radiant smile seemed to overwhelm his senses, holding him spellbound.

“It seems Delilah has finally met her match,” Janice said with a chuckle. “Her usual antics don’t stand a chance against Leah’s plan.”

Aiden’s expression grew thoughtful, his eyes narrowing slightly. “It looks like you and Ms. Sugden are getting along quite well.”

A nervous flutter stirred in Janice's heart. She had never intended to make their connection so obvious. "Is there a problem?"

She masked the slight tension in her voice, keeping her expression perfectly composed as she met Aiden's probing gaze.

"I just find it curious," Aiden replied, his look sharp. "Your closeness doesn't add up. Are you really just friends?"

"We grew up in the same orphanage. We've known each other for a long time." Janice's face revealed no emotion. Aiden remained silent, his eyes narrowing as a cunning glint appeared.

An orphanage? Both Janice and Leah? And Leah happened to be close to JE?

A sudden realization sparked in his mind, coaxing a sly, knowing grin to spread across his face.

Janice noticed it, and a rare flicker of panic crossed her features, unsettling her usual calm. Could he have figured it out?

The sharp sound of a slap rang out, cutting through the air before she could dwell on it.

Janice spun around just in time to see Leah's hand retreat.

Delilah held her cheek, her eyes swelling with shock and utter disbelief. "Ms. Sugden, why did you hit me?"

"Why must there be a reason?" Leah replied, massaging her wrist with a mild grimace. "I need to wear gloves next time. It's like trying to punch through a damn brick wall."

"Leah, are you alright?" Sierra wrapped Leah's hand in hers, examining it with obvious concern, her eyebrows furrowed.

As Delilah watched their casual exchange as if she weren't even there, her rage simmered, threatening to boil over. But then she spotted Kenneth entering the room, accompanied by Nellie. She quickly shifted gears, tears streaming freely as she sobbed.

"Ms. Sugden, I recognize your influence, but it's unfair to wield your authority like this. I came here to celebrate with my former colleagues. Why do you have to intimidate me like this?" Her voice broke through her tears. "Do I need to plead for mercy? Would that satisfy you?"

"What is going on here?" Kenneth's resonant voice cut through the tension as he stepped forward, Nellie beside him. His piercing gaze swept over the scene, pausing on Delilah before moving to Leah.

"Mr. Delgado, shouldn't I be the one asking that question?" Leah declared, folding her arms, her tone dripping with exasperation. "Would you mind telling me why a suspected plagiarist is at this gathering? Is this some sick game of yours to rile me up? Or perhaps you simply don't hold the CEO of Freak Designs in high regard?"

Kenneth's face tensed briefly before he forced a strained smile, attempting to defuse the situation. "Ms. Sugden, this must simply be a misunderstanding."

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"A misunderstanding?" Leah scoffed. "This woman is literally causing a scene right in front of you, and you call that a misunderstanding? Fine, have it your way. Since this is Delgado Jewelry's event, I'll let you handle this as you see fit. But I expect a satisfactory resolution to this mess. Otherwise, Freak Design will sever ties with Delgado Jewelry for good."

Kenneth's face darkened, and the gaze he fixed on Delilah grew much sharper, much colder.

He had intended to settle things privately for Lowell's sake, never mind that Delilah was truly at fault.

But Delilah was as defiant and unruly as ever. She even went on to disrupt the banquet. Was she deliberately challenging his authority?

"Kenneth..." Delilah began.

“You don’t need to say anything, Delilah,” Kenneth interrupted with a heavy sigh. “I didn’t want to make this public, but you forced my hand. Your actions have put Delgado Jewelry in a precarious position.”

He produced a document and waved it in front of her. “You wanted proof? Here is all the evidence of your plagiarism.”

Delilah froze, her face pale with shock and disbelief. “Kenneth, you can’t possibly slander me like this just to appease Ms. Sugden!”

A buzz went through the crowd as they exchanged doubtful glances. If Kenneth had held this evidence all along, then why hadn’t it been disclosed earlier? Its sudden revelation seemed suspicious, and it was perfectly plausible that Kenneth was only doing this to curry favor with Leah.

Kenneth remained composed in the face of Delilah’s accusation. “I kept this matter under wraps out of respect for your family, especially your brother, Lowell. I didn’t expect you to pick a fight with Ms. Sugden of all people, and on such an important occasion. Since you have no regard for your reputation, I see no reason to continue upholding the dignity of the Edwards family. I have all the evidence of your misconduct right here.”

“No! It can’t be true. I don’t believe it!” Delilah cried out in desperation. After her last mishap during the design contest, she had taken extensive precautions to cover her tracks. There was no way her schemes could have been uncovered.

Where did Kenneth get all that proof?

Janice and Aiden exchanged looks, their interest piqued by the drama unfolding before them. Janice was holding her own collection of evidence, patiently waiting for the right moment to strike.

But Kenneth had beaten her to it. How he managed to obtain it so quickly was as much a mystery to her as to everyone else.

Then a realization dawned on Janice. There could only be one explanation.

Right on cue, Kenneth declared, “I also have your resume.”

Delilah paled further. “Resume?”

“It details your background, all the way back to your school years.” Kenneth flung the papers at Delilah, causing her to tremble in place. “It contains records of your academic endeavors—or lack thereof—while you were supposedly studying abroad. You never pursued design studies. You failed nearly all your courses, spending your time drinking and partying. Before returning home, you spent a small fortune fabricating a diploma so you could pretend to be some hotshot designer. You started by plagiarizing your sister Janice’s work. When she was expelled from the family, you turned to ghost designers to salvage your fraudulent status in the industry. Everything you presented in your so-called portfolio during job interviews and exhibitions was created under an agreement with a certain ghost designer. I always knew you lacked talent, Delilah, but I never imagined you to be this useless.”

Chapter 300:

His words struck Delilah like a bolt of lightning, each one a scathing blow to her carefully crafted facade.

“No, this can’t be! It’s all fabricated; you’re lying!” Delilah stood rooted to the spot, her carefully constructed world collapsing as the evidence piled up like an unstoppable tide. Her composed facade shattered like fine crystal, leaving her raw and exposed beneath the crushing weight of truth.

In that pivotal moment, the last threads of her carefully woven deception unraveled, revealing the unsavory reality she had fought so desperately to hide.

But how could this be?

The other party had signed an agreement, and breaking it would incur a massive penalty. They couldn’t possibly afford such a sum.

And how had Kenneth uncovered the buried secrets of her time abroad?

Janice’s lips curved into a knowing smile, so subtle it was almost a whisper.

“You know something?” Aiden caught the ghost of her smile, curiosity flickering in his eyes.

Janice met his gaze with a measured nod. “Unless I’m mistaken, the Edwards family is starting to fight amongst themselves.”

She recalled Lowell’s earlier outburst and the friendship between him and Kenneth. Lowell must be the one who revealed Delilah’s secrets to Kenneth.

A wave of satisfaction washed over Janice as she watched Delilah’s carefully crafted mask crumble. Sometimes, she mused, simply watching karma unfold was far more delicious than orchestrating it herself.

“Whoa!”

“Tsk!”

Leah’s and Sierra’s voices rang out in perfect harmony, like a well-rehearsed duet.

Their eyes met in shared understanding. “So you’re not just a copycat but a liar too!”

Leah’s face twisted with contempt as she shook her head.

“The audacity of some people! Fabricating her entire education!”

“Precisely!” Sierra seized the moment with barely contained glee. “I’m starting to wonder if anything about her is genuine.”

“Now that you mention it, that nose looks suspiciously perfect, and those breasts... Tsk, Silicon Valley if you ask me...”

“Ah!” The mocking laughter became unbearable, tearing a raw cry from Delilah’s throat.

“Delilah, are you pretending to faint now?”

Leah’s words cut through Delilah’s thoughts like a knife, freezing her mid-sway as she considered exactly that escape.

“By all means, go ahead and swoon. The floor is yours. We’re dying to see your theatrical talents. Perhaps you’ll give us an Oscar-worthy performance?”

“Leah Sugden!” Delilah’s composure finally cracked, her teeth clenched so hard her jaw ached.

“No need to shout, darling. My hearing is perfectly intact.”

Leah’s casual indifference only fueled Delilah’s fury further, but the growing crowd of spectators, all eagerly drinking in her humiliation, made every second feel like an eternity under hot stage lights.

In desperation, she turned to Kenneth, her eyes silently begging for mercy. She hoped he would consider his connection to Lowell and throw her a lifeline.