

Wrath 371

Chapter 371:

But none of that mattered.

What truly mattered was that he had finally found the person he'd been searching for all these years.

Aiden slipped the bracelet onto his wrist, caressing it gently, his gaze tender. "So it's you. Thankfully, it's you."

The following day, while Aiden was away, Janice moved out with Sierra's help.

The butler and the servants watched them leave with heavy hearts. Masters as kind, understanding, and gentle as Janice were a rare treasure—truly one in a million.

Inside the car, Sierra frowned and pouted as she stared out the window.

"Janice, are we really leaving the Green family like this? Without even saying goodbye to Aiden? Isn't that a bit wrong? Besides, I was planning to go abroad with you to visit Nina, but now you and Aiden are..."

She paused, unable to bring herself to say the word "divorced."

Though she had suspected the nature of their marriage for some time, she had always hoped they'd work it out.

Janice was extraordinary. Who in the world could possibly deserve her? In Sierra's eyes, Aiden was the only one who could even come close.

"My marriage with Aiden was never real. Trying to force it would only have made both of us miserable," Janice replied, her smile light and carefree, betraying no regret. Only freedom—and a deep sense of relief—shone through. "And as for Nina, you can still go visit her. Nothing changes that."

Sierra's face fell. How could that be the same?

If Nina found out they were divorced, she would definitely explode with anger.

She could already picture it—Nina's furious reaction when she returned and heard the news.

Nina had always adored Janice. To her, Janice was family, someone irreplaceable. The thought of losing her in such a way would be devastating.

"I always thought you and Aiden were a good match. Even if your marriage started as a transaction, you could have turned it into something real," Sierra said.

"I gave him a chance," Janice responded with a casual shrug. "But he didn't take it."

"Huh?" Sierra raised an eyebrow, sensing there was more to the story. "Janice, did you and Aiden know each other before the marriage?"

Janice's lips curled in amusement, but she didn't answer right away. Instead, she flicked Sierra's forehead with a playful tap. "Adults' matters are none of your business, little girl."

"As for Carman and Dotson, they've both been blacklisted in their respective fields. Carman can no longer pursue music. He's been reduced to acting in low-budget online dramas just to scrape by. Dotson's situation is even worse. The fall from grace drove him to madness, and now he's been sent to a psychiatric hospital."

In short, the once-powerful Edwards family had completely disintegrated.

Their own selfishness and greed had led them down this path of ruin.

Suddenly, Sierra's face turned pale, her lips trembling slightly.

Leah caught the change and instantly understood what was going through her mind.

“Your sister seems like she’s not doing well either.”

“What happened to her?”

Leah sighed again and handed over the tablet, her gaze filled with empathy. “You’d better see for yourself.”

Sierra took the tablet, a sense of foreboding settling in the pit of her stomach.

“Miss Ramirez Allegedly Attacked and Mentally Unstable: Family Drama or Ruthless Manipulation?”
Sierra’s hands started shaking when she saw the headline, and the tablet nearly fell from her hands.

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Janice reacted quickly. She reached out and caught it. Glancing up, she met Sierra’s eyes with worry.
“Sierra, are you alright?”

“Janice, I need to go back home.”

Janice looked at Leah, who gave her a nod.

“Costello, take us to Sierra’s home.”

Once she gave the order, Leah’s voice softened. “Sierra, your sister’s troubles started because she trusted Bart, that jerk. He’s the one who hurt her. But he’s already faced the consequences, so you need to try and move past it.”

Janice gently placed her hand on Sierra’s head, her voice calm and comforting. “When you get back, make sure to be there for your sister. If she can get through this, she’ll have a better future.”

Sierra didn't say a word and just gave a small nod in response.

She knew Nellie's downfall was her own fault. If Janice hadn't stepped in, saving her from that nightmare, Nellie would still be suffering at the hands of those monsters.

Bart was absolutely vile. Not only did he rape Nellie, but he also let others do the same. For someone like her, that kind of torment was pure hell.

Before long, the car pulled over.

To keep things low-key, Janice had Costello park a bit farther away.

"Sierra, if anything's bothering you, don't hesitate to tell me."

"Thanks, Janice."

Sierra gave a thankful bow to both Janice and Leah before turning, determined, and heading toward the house.

"It feels like she's heading straight into the lion's den. And the irony is, it's her own home," Leah said, her voice tinged with resignation as she leaned against the car window.

Janice narrowed her eyes. "For Sierra, the Ramirez family is like a golden cage, trapping her inside."

It was unfortunate that after finally breaking free, Sierra had to go back for her sister.

Leah pressed her lips together and eyed Janice with confusion. "Nellie's getting exactly what she deserves, and she even tried to hurt you with Bart. So, why did you still step in to help her?"

Nellie's situation was certainly tragic, but she'd been one of those plotting against Janice. With Janice's tendency to hold grudges, no matter how sad Nellie's situation was, she wouldn't feel an ounce of sympathy.

In Leah's eyes, anyone who dared to hurt Janice deserved no mercy.

"Because she still has a bit of a conscience," Janice said calmly, signaling Costello to move.

She'd heard from Kenneth that someone had told him to go save her in the suburbs. After thinking it through, she realized the tip had come from Nellie.

After going through hell, Nellie having tried to tip Kenneth off was enough for Janice to give her a chance.

Just then, Leah's phone buzzed.

"Leah, where are you? Glenn's already made the meal and is just waiting for you guys."

Leah hesitated, looking uncomfortable. "We got delayed, but we'll be there shortly."

As soon as she finished speaking, Costello slammed his foot on the gas pedal, sending Leah lurching forward and causing her phone to fly out of her hand.

"Costello, could you at least give us a heads-up before you speed up like that?" she exclaimed.

"All right."

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His rough voice didn't make it clear if he was agreeing or if he'd do it again next time.

Janice couldn't help but smile as she watched them bicker, feeling a sense of warmth.

She no longer cared about blood ties. The ones who truly mattered were the ones standing by her, showing they cared.

"Glenn, they said they'll be arriving soon."

Prescott quickly ended the call, making sure Leah's loud voice wouldn't startle Glenn.

"Tsk. Leah's still as impatient as always." Glenn chuckled, shaking his head fondly. His eyes, though, were filled with warmth.

He'd watched Janice, Leah, and the rest of them grow up, so he knew their personalities inside and out. He understood that Leah only revealed her true self to those she trusted and was close to.

"By the way, what's with the extra chair at the table?" Prescott pushed his glasses up, looking puzzled at the chair that had been set out.

"I've invited a special guest today, aside from all of you," Glenn said with a playful smile.

"Oh, you're making me wait, huh?" Prescott said, surprised.

Glenn let out a soft laugh. "What? You can keep secrets, but I can't?"

"No, no, that's not it," Prescott said awkwardly. "I'm just used to you being serious all the time, so it's a little unexpected hearing you joke around."

"I'm old enough to be on the edge of the grave. Why bother with a serious face all the time? Back when you were a handful, I had to be tough to keep you in check. But now, seeing all of you grown up, I don't have to keep up the act anymore."

When Prescott heard what Glenn said, a sharp sting of bitterness washed over him.

He rose to his feet and enveloped Glenn in a firm embrace. "Glenn, you have to stay with us for a long time. We're only just beginning our journey, and we need you here to cheer us on every step of the way."

Glenn returned the gesture with a warm smile, soothingly patting Prescott's back. "Alright, alright, I promise to stick around."

Prescott, typically a man of few words, was uncharacteristically emotional. It was clear to Glenn that Prescott was deeply concerned about his health.

Soon after, Janice, Leah, and Costello joined them.

"Prescott, you weren't tearing up, were you? Your eyes are quite red," Leah said in a playful tone as soon as she saw him.

"I just had something in my eye," Prescott quickly replied.

"Really? And I'm supposed to believe that?"

"Believe it if you want."

Glenn laughed, then signaled for everyone to gather around. "Everyone's here now. Grab a chair."

"Hold on a sec!" Leah paused and frowned, noticing the spare chair at the table. "Glenn, are we expecting someone else? I thought today it was just the four of us."

Everyone turned their gaze to Glenn.

"I ran into someone fascinating yesterday. I thought it would be great to introduce him to everyone."

“Wow, he must be something else if you found him impressive. A superhero or something?”

Glenn gave Leah a stern look. “Can’t you take things seriously for once?”

Then, glancing at his watch, he nodded. “He’ll be here any moment now.”

As soon as he finished his sentence, the dining room door swung open. A figure entered, capturing everyone’s attention.

When they saw who it was, their faces lit up with surprise, especially Janice, who stared in shock.

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“Aiden? What are you doing here?” she exclaimed.

Aiden acknowledged Glenn with a nod before addressing Janice.

“Glenn said he was cooking today and invited me to sample his cuisine, so I decided to drop in. I wasn’t expecting to see you here as well,” he said, his words pointedly for Janice.

Leah, however, was quick to intercept. She stepped in front of Janice with her arms crossed. “Is this some kind of game to you?”

“What do you mean?” Aiden’s voice remained even, unaffected by Leah’s clear irritation. He appeared completely unbothered.

“Do the rest of us just disappear when you talk to Glenn and Janice?”

“My apologies. That was inconsiderate of me.”

Leah was taken aback by Aiden's sudden apology, momentarily lost for words.

"Hello, everyone. I'm Aiden Green." Aiden turned to address the others, nodding at Prescott, Costello, and Leah.

"Leah, let's be nice," Glenn interjected, trying to ease the growing tension. "After all, he is our guest."

Unable to argue against Glenn, Leah gave Aiden a stern look before sitting next to Janice.

Aiden kept his courteous smile and turned to Prescott.

"Would you mind trading seats with me?"

"Excuse me?" Prescott responded, visibly surprised.

He was aware of Aiden's tough reputation, a man of few words and direct actions. Seeing Aiden's courteous behavior now left him somewhat confused.

"Thank you," Aiden said, assuming agreement.

"Wait! I didn't—"

Before Prescott could fully articulate his objection, Aiden had moved him aside and taken his place.

Just as Leah was about to protest, Glenn gave her a firm look.

"All right, everyone, let's sit down. It's rare for us all to gather like this. Let's raise a glass to good company."

Leah pouted. Who asked for Aiden's company anyway?

But before she could voice her displeasure, Janice subtly shook her head. This dinner was Glenn's arrangement, and he must have had his reasons for inviting Aiden. She preferred not to disrupt his plans.

Respecting Janice's judgment, Leah reluctantly held back her annoyance.

Costello remained typically indifferent. Without any directive from Janice, he stayed silent, his demeanor as stoic as a sculpture.

Meanwhile, Prescott quietly readjusted his glasses and took a seat next to Costello.

After the drinks were served and toasts made, the mood around the table began to relax.

"So, Aiden, why are you here?" Janice glanced at Aiden with curiosity in her eyes.

Aiden returned her look confidently, a slight smile appearing on his face. "I might ask you the same. You left in such a hurry, without a proper goodbye."

Janice was momentarily taken aback by his comment. "I've already said our farewells. There was nothing more to say."

"A goodbye doesn't have to mean it's forever, right?" His remark lingered, leaving Janice momentarily at a loss for words.

"Aiden, what are you trying to achieve?" she asked. However, Aiden turned his attention to Glenn instead of answering. "May I have a private word with Janice? Would it be alright if we stepped outside for a moment?"

The request surprised everyone. They all expected Glenn to decline, but he looked at Janice and then nodded. "Go ahead. It seems you two need to discuss something."

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“Seriously? What’s there left to discuss? They’re already divorced.” Leah frowned, clearly unhappy.

But Glenn dismissed her concerns. “Leah, focus on your meal. You’ve hardly eaten anything.”

To distract her, he reached over and added more food to her plate.

Leah caught on to Glenn’s subtle intentions right away—he was trying to give Aiden and Janice space to work through their relationship.

Though she harbored a strong dislike for Aiden, she still respected Glenn’s wishes.

“Is that okay?” Aiden asked Janice. The gentleness in his tone was a stark departure from his typically commanding demeanor.

Janice blinked, surprised by the changes in him. Rising from her seat, she answered with measured grace, “Since you’re being so earnest, how could I possibly refuse?”

Her gaze swept over the others at the table. “You all go ahead and eat. I will be back soon.”

With a nod, she followed Aiden out of the room.

She was walking a few paces behind, her eyes drawn to his back. She couldn’t help but notice how much he’d changed. Once a man of icy reserve, he now seemed reachable. It was as though she could glimpse the person beneath the fortress of his demeanor. It was unexpectedly strange.

“Did you draw this?”

Aiden’s voice interrupted her musings as he stopped in front of a graffiti-covered wall.

Janice's brows lifted in surprise as she took in the familiar painting. "You were here yesterday, weren't you?"

"I was."

"So that's why Glenn invited you to this gathering."

Janice guessed Aiden must have visited the orphanage yesterday and had a conversation with Glenn. With his talent, it was only natural for Glenn, known for appreciating talent, to take a liking to him. But why had Aiden been there in the first place?

As if reading her thoughts, Aiden turned to her and stepped closer. "I told you I'd help you."

His face, striking and unsettlingly near, sent a flicker through her composure. Her lashes fluttered, but she held her ground. Seeing him this close, Janice couldn't deny it—Aiden was breathtaking.

And now that he no longer bore the shadow of his old struggles, his charisma was undeniable, an aura that demanded attention.

"I already told you," she replied coolly, "I don't need your help."

Aiden's eyes drifted back to the graffiti. His voice softened, almost reverent. "To create something so warm and hopeful, your heart must still long for family. Whatever harm the Edwards family caused, I don't think it could extinguish that light inside you."

"Aiden, this conversation is pointless. We're already—"

"I know. We're already divorced. But..."

Aiden took another step forward, closing the gap between them. His face was close enough now that she could see every detail—the faint lines at the corners of his eyes, his pores, the way his dark irises

seemed to pull her in. The faint scent of his cologne curled around her, and her heart betrayed her with an uneven flutter.

Aiden had never been like this before—so forward, so disarmingly tender.

“I have feelings for you,” he murmured.

The line hit her like a bolt of lightning.

For a moment, her mind went completely blank.

“Are you nuts?” she snapped, stepping back instinctively.

“We’re already divorced. What’s the point of saying it now?”

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“Our marriage wasn’t real from the start, Janice. But now that we’re divorced, I can finally pursue you for real.”

He raised his hand, revealing a bracelet snug around his wrist, and its design was familiar enough to halt her in her tracks.

“Why do you have my bracelet?”

“This is what ties us together.”

His eyes locked onto hers, burning with an intensity that unsettled her.

“You’ve always known, haven’t you? That you were the one who saved my life back then?”

Janice's expression changed, the warmth in her eyes cooling into something distant. "Yes."

"Then why didn't you tell me?" Aiden's voice grew urgent, his brows knitting together in frustration. "Do you have any idea how long I've been looking for you?"

"Why should I tell you?"

Her words left him completely stunned.

She stepped closer, her hard gaze locked on him, forcing him to retreat a step.

"Saving you back then was just a passing act. Do you think I wanted your gratitude?"

Aiden was rendered speechless by her words.

"Do you think I should have approached you and clung to the Green family? Or should I be suspected and questioned by you like what happened to Tess?" Janice stepped forward again.

Aiden shook his head. "It's not what you think, Janice."

"Then what is it?"

This time, Aiden didn't retreat. He took a deep breath as if steeling himself. "I couldn't see your face clearly back then, but I never forgot the impression you left on me. When I met Tess, I knew she wasn't the one who saved me. And maybe you think I'm making excuses now, but it doesn't matter. I need you to hear this, Janice."

Aiden's gaze grew increasingly intense, causing Janice's heart to skip a beat.

"From the moment I first saw you, I've been drawn to you. I've been searching for you, not just to repay you, but because I want to pursue you."

His words, so direct, so uncharacteristically vulnerable, left Janice reeling.

She blinked, certain she must be imagining things. Was the man in front of her really the same guy who always had a poker face?

“Aiden, do you even know me well?” Janice finally broke the silence.

Aiden blinked in surprise. It was as though her words had completely blindsided him, leaving him scrambling for a response. “I...”

“You don’t understand me at all!” Janice didn’t wait for him to finish, cutting him off without hesitation.

Turning on her heel, she faced him fully, her eyes sharp and distant.

“If you truly understood me, we wouldn’t even be having this conversation right now.”

Aiden was at a loss for words. Her unwavering, frosty stare sent an unexpected wave of panic crashing over him. “Janice, what are you trying to say?”

“I gave you an opportunity once, but you let it slip through your fingers. You got tangled up in your doubts about whether Tess was the woman from back then. I’ve divorced you, severed every connection we had, and I have no intention of looking back or being part of your life anymore.”

Her tone was unsettlingly composed, yet it struck him like a bitter gust of wind, leaving him cold to the core.

“Glenn clearly thinks highly of you. Why else would he trust you with that bracelet? I don’t want to disappoint him. You know what you need to do, right?”

Aiden’s hands balled into fists, his knuckles white as his face turned ashen. Had he overlooked something?

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The memory hit him like a lightning bolt. Back when he was obsessed with unraveling Tess's identity, Janice had asked if they should stop pretending and make it real.

Was that the moment?

Reflecting on the way she had looked at him then, it finally dawned on him how much she had meant those words.

"You like me, don't you?" he asked.

Janice hesitated briefly but then walked away, not sparing him another glance.

As Aiden watched her retreating figure, he felt an unbearable weight pressing down on him, almost pushing him over the edge.

He believed that speaking from the heart might be enough to bring Janice back to him, but he had underestimated the strength of her resolve.

Just like the day she walked away from the Edwards family, she had made her choice, and once she did, she never looked back.

She was right. He had never truly understood her. Yet, deep down, he longed for another chance to truly know the woman he had lost.

Drawing in a deep breath, his gaze hardened with newfound determination. "Janice, you've stepped back into my life, and I can't bear to see you walk away again."

He placed a trembling hand over his chest, as if trying to steady the ache within.

Janice stepped back into the dining room, a frown etched on her face. “What’s happening here?”

The room felt tense. Everyone wore a grim expression. Leah’s face was ghostly pale, as though something had shaken her to the core.

Leah wasn’t one to scare easily, so what could have rattled her this badly?

Janice’s eyes fell on a gift box sitting in front of Leah. Curiosity piqued, she walked over and carefully removed its contents.

Her expression darkened the moment she saw what lay inside—a letter accompanied by a blood-stained brooch.

“Is Leonidas back?”

At the mention of the name, Leah’s body trembled, and she sank heavily into her chair. “Didn’t he leave the country? Why is he here? Is he back for revenge?”

“Leah, take a breath and calm yourself.”

Janice shot Glenn a quick, apologetic glance.

Glenn gave a small nod of understanding before standing to his feet. “I’ll check on the kids. You all carry on.”

Once Glenn stepped out, Janice took a seat next to Leah, placing a reassuring hand on her arm.

“Leah, don’t worry. If he’s really back, I promise he won’t get anywhere near you.”

There was an icy determination in Janice’s eyes as she spoke, and somehow, her steady voice seemed to calm Leah’s frayed nerves.

“I’ll keep you safe, Leah.” Costello’s quiet words carried the weight of an unshakable vow.

“Exactly. The three of us are here, and that madman won’t get a chance to touch you.” Prescott pushed his glasses up the bridge of his nose, trying to muster some courage, though his shaky legs betrayed him. It wasn’t just Leah who was scared; even Prescott couldn’t hide his fear of Leonidas.

“You guys know Leonidas Miller?” Aiden walked in, catching the tail end of the conversation.

Instantly, all eyes turned to Aiden, their faces reflecting a mix of surprise and curiosity.

“You know Leonidas, too?” Prescott’s voice carried disbelief as he stared at Aiden.

“I ran into him once while I was abroad.” Aiden sat next to Janice, his face calm and detached, as though her earlier remarks hadn’t bothered him. “He’s utterly unhinged. Everything he says and does screams insanity.”

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Janice studied Aiden closely, her gaze thoughtful.

Before he took control of the Green family, he had spent time abroad, working as a mercenary and even starting his own gang. With his skills and drive, he had managed to succeed even in unfamiliar territories.

She never imagined Aiden would have crossed paths with Leonidas.

“Did you fight him?” she asked.

Aiden cast a glance at her before shaking his head. “I worked with him once—just that one time. He’s a total maniac, with no morals or conscience to speak of.”

Janice had an instinctive knack for reading between the lines, and she immediately understood what Aiden meant. Leonidas was trouble personified—a complete bad seed through and through.

Perhaps that was why his family had deserted him. From the day he set foot in the orphanage, the children lived in a constant state of dread.

Snakes slithered out of nowhere, insects crawled into beds, and meals came laced with sand—or worse, the decaying corpses of bugs. No one suffered more than Leah, whose timid nature made her an easy target.

Only Janice had the nerve to keep Leonidas in check.

She wasn't exactly popular herself—quiet and standoffish. She preferred her small circle of friends: Leah, Prescott, and Costello.

One unforgettable day, Leonidas targeted Leah. He stuffed her clothes with bugs, leaving the poor girl paralyzed and trembling with fear.

When Janice heard that, she came down like a storm. She plucked the insects off Leah, one by one, only to shockingly shove them straight into Leonidas's mouth.

But Leonidas didn't flinch. In fact, he chewed on the insects with grotesque enthusiasm, grinning all the while. The surrounding children recoiled in horror, but Janice didn't blink.

She raised her fist and gave Leonidas a good beating. It was this beating that made this madman restrain himself a bit.

Janice told him, "If you bully them again, I'll beat you to death!"

Her fearless defiance earned Leah's unwavering loyalty, and from that moment, Leah leaned on her for strength and security.

Leonidas wasn't completely tamed, but he never dared act out when Janice was around. He terrorized others when she was absent.

For him, death was the only thing to fear—it meant the end of his twisted fun.

Even the orphanage director and staff were frightened by his madness and perversion. Yet, pity stayed their hand.

Instead of expelling him, they hoped patience and guidance might rehabilitate him.

But Leonidas only grew darker with age. He became a brooding figure, skulking in corners with a gaze that sent shivers down spines.

If Janice was around, he would hold back. But once she was gone, he'd return to suffocating everyone in fear.

Then came the day a foreign couple arrived at the orphanage, hoping to adopt.

By some clever maneuvering with her friends, Janice ensured that Leonidas caught their attention, and in the end, they chose him.

The oppressive shadow was lifted the day he left, and the children breathed freely for the first time in years.

No one expected him to reappear until years later, when he suddenly sent a gift and announced his return. It dredged up Leah's buried fears.

"Prescott," Janice commanded, "look into Leonidas. Find out what he's planning."

"On it."

She turned to Costello next. "Stay with Leah for now. And if you run into Leonidas, don't hold back."

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"Of course."

Aiden, watching Janice take charge, interjected with an offer. "I can help."

Janice shot him a cold look. "We're not that close. Don't involve yourself."

Her curt dismissal stung. Aiden frowned. "Janice, we were married once. Even if it was just a deal, there must be something left between us. Right?"

"I don't want to talk about it," Janice said with a shrug, her indifference only deepening Aiden's frustration.

"Fine. Call it meddling, then." His tone softened—a rare concession for a man of his pride. But for Janice, he was willing to bend.

"Listen, I've crossed paths with Leonidas. I might know more about him than you think," Aiden continued before Janice could respond. "I can tap into my overseas connections. It'll be faster and more effective than anything you're planning, don't you think?"

To persuade her, he added, "You don't want Leah living like this, do you?"

Janice glanced at Leah, who sat pale and trembling, and nodded reluctantly.

Aiden's lips curved in quiet triumph. Without wasting time, he called Braylen. "Investigate Leonidas Miller. Dig up everything on that psychopath."

Then he hung up and exhaled a huge sigh of relief. For now, Janice couldn't cut him out entirely.

The meal had turned sour, weighed down by the ominous mention of Leonidas. Glenn, however, didn't hold it against anyone—he understood their feelings all too well.

After all, he had once been a victim of Leonidas' torment. If not for his resilience and strong spirit, he might not have endured.

"Janice, I know your grudge against Leonidas runs deep, but..." His voice trailed off, and a weary sigh escaped him as he debated how much to say.

Janice caught his unease and offered a reassuring smile. "Don't worry. I handled him before, and I can handle him again. As long as he doesn't cross the line, I'm willing to let it slide."

"All right then. It's getting late. You should all head back." He glanced at Aiden, giving him a knowing smile.

"Aiden, why don't you take Janice home?" Glenn suggested.

"Sure thing," Aiden replied and gave him a mental thumbs-up. He appreciated how well Glenn knew him.

He figured it might be time to put some money into improving the Generous Lives Orphanage.

Janice hesitated, a frown tugging at her lips, but with Glenn having said it, she couldn't exactly say no. "Thanks in advance, Aiden."

So, Prescott, Costello, and Leah got in one car and drove off.

Aiden and Janice took the other car. Braylen was supposed to drive, but Aiden sent him off on an errand to give them some privacy.

After Janice climbed into the car, she stayed quiet.

The air was a bit tense, and Aiden couldn't help but steal a glance at her through the rearview mirror every now and then.

"Janice, are you still trying to find your family?"

She frowned, unsure why he was bringing this up. "Why bring this up now?"

"The Edwards family isn't your real family, so your real family must still be out there. Don't you want to find them?"

"No, I don't," Janice answered without a second thought.

Aiden frowned, the words he wanted to say getting caught in his throat.

"I've said it before, right? I don't need your help, but I appreciate your kindness," Janice reminded him.

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Aiden shook his head, a small, bitter smile tugging at his lips. "But I did come across some clues about your family."

He paused, watching her expression in the mirror.

Even though Janice had said she wasn't looking for answers, her eyebrows lifted just slightly when she heard there might be news.

Aiden, knowing she wouldn't ask, went ahead, "I met with Glenn yesterday to get the details about your adoption. I reviewed all the surveillance footage around the orphanage, but nothing stood out."

Janice frowned, but she stayed quiet.

"I'm sure you've had Prescott, your genius hacker, go over those videos too. But there's one thing you might've missed."

"What's that?"

When Janice finally spoke, Aiden couldn't help but give a small smile.

"I interviewed every resident within a kilometer of the place."

Janice stared at him, shocked, disbelief written all over her face. "Are you crazy? There must be at least a thousand people within that distance. You really spoke to all of them?"

Aiden's smile barely flickered, as if what sounded like an insane task was no big deal to him. "Yes, I did."

"You must be having plenty of time these days."

Aiden shook his head, his gaze flicking over to Janice. "Your concerns matter to me."

Janice bit her lip and turned to stare out the window but still asked, "So, what's the lead?"

"Someone remembered a woman of obvious high status dropping you off at the orphanage back then."

Another rich family, huh?

Janice's expression darkened, a flicker of disdain crossing her features.

Aiden understood how she felt. She'd been hurt by the Edwards family and had no love for the rich.

"Actually, the witness said that woman seemed reluctant to leave, kissing you over and over before finally setting you down."

“What does that even prove?” Janice’s voice was icy, void of any emotion. “If she truly cared, she wouldn’t have just walked away from me.”

Aiden let out a sigh, rubbing his temples, clearly frustrated. “Look, if I found out that woman just left you for no reason, I wouldn’t have brought this up. I would’ve kept it to myself, hoping to spare you more pain. But...”

Aiden paused, his gaze narrowing, a sharp gleam in his eyes. “Your mother had her reasons.”

“That’s enough, Aiden,” Janice cut in, her brows knitted together.

She was torn between wanting to know the truth and fearing that the truth might hurt her again.

“I’m sorry, but you need to hear this,” Aiden pushed on, ignoring Janice’s protest. “After looking into it and comparing details, it seems you might be the daughter of the White family from Cloverhill, the capital.”

Janice sneered, her gaze dimming, as though she’d expected this.

“Yes, you’re from a prestigious family. But the White family was ruined over ten years ago, supposedly by enemies. The family head and his wife died in a brutal way.”

Janice’s eyes widened, her gaze sharpening as she stared at Aiden. “You’re not trying to tell me that woman...”

“Exactly. That woman was killed with her husband not long after she left you at the orphanage.”

Janice’s hands balled into fists, her gaze filled with a whirlwind of emotions. The weight of the truth was almost too overwhelming for her to bear in that moment.