

Wrath 571

Chapter 571:

Without Carlton's attention, she risked fading into obscurity, becoming just another forgotten face in the background.

The production team had assembled a dazzling array of contestants, each more captivating than the last. Her once-prized attributes now seemed as ordinary as tap water in an ocean of champagne.

Demi's eyes drifted to Daniel, who was stretching nearby. The thought of having to charm someone so unremarkable made her stomach turn. In another corner of the pool area, Alissa and Janice had sequestered themselves for a private conversation.

"I kind of understand why Leonidas asked me to get you out of prison," Alissa remarked, studying Delilah with newfound appreciation. "You've proven you're not completely useless."

"Thank you for giving me the chance," Delilah replied, her smile perfectly measured.

"Perform well. You need to prove your worth to me, understand?"

Delilah lowered her gaze, a glacial glint flickering in her eyes like lightning in a winter storm. "I understand. I won't let you down."

Meanwhile, the poolside drama spilled into the digital realm, where internet sleuths were digging into Demi's past like vultures picking at old bones. Vicious rumors circulated about her alleged liaisons with various businessmen, painting her as someone who'd do anything to climb the social ladder. These whispers turned even the fence-sitters against her, their doubts crystallizing into condemnation.

Carlton wasn't immune to the public's wrath either. Critics lambasted him as a hopeless romantic, too naive to separate genuine emotion from calculated deception.

When Aiden stepped out of the villa, the pool area unfolded before him like a theater of the absurd. He watched as Delilah masterfully twisted reality to suit her purposes and couldn't help but chuckle—some

things never changed. But Demi? She was almost pitiable. Watching her flounder against Delilah's expert manipulation was like watching a kitten try to outmaneuver a seasoned predator.

Aiden glanced back at the villa, feeling an unexpected urge to share this juicy development with Janice. The impulse gave him pause. Since when had he started wanting to gossip with her?

A graceful figure emerged from the villa, commanding Aiden's attention like a moth to a flame. His eyes brightened instantly, drinking in the sight before him. Janice was a vision of natural beauty, her makeup-free face radiating pure elegance. What she'd done with a simple T-shirt and capri pants defied imagination. Strategic cutouts and patterns played peek-a-boo with her skin, creating an alluring mystery.

Aiden recognized the influence of traditional paper-cutting art in her design—the way she'd metamorphosed ordinary clothing into a vintage-inspired swimsuit that seemed to tell its own story.

"Aiden, what are you daydreaming about?" Janice's voice startled him from his reverie. She'd approached without him noticing.

Aiden's lips curved into a gentle smile. "I was just thinking—you look so beautiful."

Chapter 572:

The compliment caught Janice off guard, her eyes widening in surprise. Since when had he become such a smooth talker? Not that she minded.

"This swimsuit is also very unique, perfectly matching your style," Aiden continued, as if plucking the thoughts straight from her mind.

"I had no choice. The swimsuits provided by the show were too ugly, so I had to make my own," Janice said, spreading her hands in an exaggerated gesture of resignation that somehow managed to be both graceful and playful.

It was then that Aiden caught sight of Stephen standing off to the side. His expression darkened into a frown as he took in Stephen's appearance. "Are you sure it's okay to wear that?"

Stephen turned to Janice with puppy-dog eyes. “I trust Janice. If she says it’s fine, then it’s fine.”

The scene began drawing attention as other guests noticed the trio by the villa. But their gazes bypassed both Janice and Aiden, fixing instead on Stephen with undisguised amazement.

Stephen’s outfit had rendered them speechless, their faces a perfect tableau of confusion.

Stephen’s face remained the same handsome one—calm, composed, and yet somehow kind. Just seeing it brought a sense of joy.

But the real surprise was what he was wearing. A diving suit?

Yes, a full-on diving suit! All he needed was an oxygen tank, and he’d be ready to dive in.

Everyone stared, completely stunned by the sight, some even slapping their own faces as if trying to wake up from a bizarre dream.

The nation’s heartthrob, Stephen, was now dressed in a diving suit, hiding his strong chest and toned abs. It was as bewildering as seeing a supermodel in a parka.

Stephen could feel the weight of everyone’s confused stares. Even with his strong ability to handle pressure, he couldn’t help but feel a bit overwhelmed.

“Maybe I should change back. Wearing this for the show feels so strange.”

“No way!” Janice shook her head, her gaze unwavering as she met his. “You need to keep this diving suit on until the show’s over. You’re injured, after all.”

Stephen felt a bit helpless, but he knew Janice had good intentions.

“But how do I explain this to everyone?”

“I’ve got it covered,” Janice said with a confident smile.

“Is Stephen hurt?” Aiden asked, confused. “Even if he is, he doesn’t need to dress like this, does he?”

“It’s a little complicated. I’ll explain later.” Janice gave Aiden a glance. She had already noticed someone approaching, likely intrigued by Stephen’s outlandish outfit.

Aiden nodded, sensing there was more to the story, and stepped aside without question.

“Janice, what’s going on with Stephen?” Maggie blinked, her curiosity evident as she studied Stephen. “Why is he wearing this?”

“Looks like he’s afraid of drowning since he can’t swim!” Daniel laughed loudly as he swaggered over. “Seriously, Stephen, how can someone as well-known as you not know how to swim?”

Chapter 573:

“Shut up!” Janice shot him a glare. Daniel opened his mouth to retort, but her icy stare made him hesitate.

He cursed internally, wondering why he’d ever be intimidated by this woman. He consoled himself that it wasn’t fear; it was respect.

“Listen up!” Janice dismissed Daniel’s hesitation and spoke to the crowd. “I made a bet with Stephen, and he lost. This is his punishment—he’ll wear this suit for the day.”

“Oh my gosh! Janice, are you doing this just to make me suffer? I was dying to see Stephen’s perfect body!”

“Janice has gone too far! She knows this is a swim competition meant to show off physiques, and now she’s hiding Stephen’s body. What’s the point of that?”

“This is a protest! Janice made a private bet with Stephen without the show’s approval. They should cancel that bet and let us see his abs!”

The online audience was furious, especially Stephen’s fans, who flooded the live stream with criticism directed at Janice.

Devin, seeing the flood of comments attacking Janice, began to sweat nervously.

All eyes were on them, but Janice was the one taking the heat. If Leah turned on him, he didn’t know how he’d face her.

“Devin, what now? Should we talk to Janice and ask her to let Stephen change out of that suit?” a staff member asked.

Devin’s brow furrowed in concern. Janice had mentioned that Stephen was injured and couldn’t swim, and for a moment, he thought it would be fine for him to simply sit on the sidelines and act as a judge.

But who could have guessed Janice would make Stephen wear a diving suit? Now there was nothing left to see.

After all, the fans tuned in to see Stephen’s physique and his eight-pack abs.

As he sat there, torn, his phone rang. It was Leah.

“Devin, I know what you’re thinking, but don’t act on it. Don’t even consider it.”

“But the live stream’s blowing up...”

“Don’t stress, my team’s got it covered. You just focus on making sure the show keeps running smoothly.”

Devin sighed. With Leah giving the orders, he had no choice but to go along. “Alright, everyone, keep recording as planned. Don’t let the comments bother you.”

“The criticism’s getting worse, and now there’s a whole group of trolls going after us.”

This was exactly what Devin had feared.

Once the negativity started gaining momentum, the show’s rivals would take any chance to stir the pot.

Just then, a staff member watching the live stream comments shouted, “The negative comments are down a lot! Someone must be handling them behind the scenes.”

Devin blinked in surprise as he remembered Leah’s earlier instructions. It looked like Leah’s quick action in handling the comments had worked like a charm.

He hadn’t expected her to react so swiftly, managing to shut down the negativity in such a short span of time.

Chapter 574:

A lot of online viewers quickly realized that any comments badmouthing Janice just wouldn’t get through. No matter how hard they tried, if the comment had anything to do with Janice, the system would block it right away.

“I guess we just have to accept it. If Stephen’s fine with it, what can we do?”

“Now I’m really curious. How did Stephen end up making a bet with Janice? What was it about?”

“Ugh, I just want to see Stephen’s amazing body.”

Even though the audience was upset, there was nothing they could do about the bet Janice and Stephen had made between themselves.

All nine of the guests had gathered by the pool. With so many attractive men and women together, the scene was simply stunning—a visual treat. This beautiful sight helped calm the nerves of many online viewers.

“Honestly, Janice’s swimsuit is really something.”

“Exactly! I thought the same. It has such a unique style and looks super classy.”

“Hold on a second! Why does it look like this swimsuit was made out of regular clothes?”

Some sharp-eyed viewers caught on. Aside from the cut-out design, wasn’t this just regular clothing?

“This is so clever! A T-shirt and capri pants turned into a swimsuit?”

“Did you forget where Janice used to work? Delgado Jewelry. She’s a designer, so it makes sense she’d have this kind of talent.”

It wasn’t just the audience—after getting over the shock of Stephen’s outfit, even the guests started noticing Janice’s unique swimsuit.

“Janice, where did you get this swimsuit?” Maggie asked, intrigued. “I looked everywhere and couldn’t find one like it.”

“I made it myself,” Janice said with a smile. “The swimsuits the show gave us didn’t appeal to me, so I just took some regular clothes and turned them into this.”

“Janice, you’re incredible,” Maggie exclaimed, her eyes shining with admiration. “I never would’ve guessed it was made from everyday clothes if you hadn’t mentioned it. If I’d known you were so skilled, I would’ve asked you to help with mine too.”

“There’ll be other chances,” Janice replied, gently patting Maggie’s head. Suddenly, she felt a sharp gaze on her back, making her turn to see who it was. Liliana stood off to the side, her gaze fixed on Janice with an intensity that didn’t go unnoticed.

From the fire in her eyes, Janice could sense a clear undercurrent of hostility. It left her confused. She couldn’t think of a single reason why Liliana would be so openly antagonistic towards her—she hadn’t done anything to offend her.

Janice had no interest in getting involved with Liliana, but the woman walked up to her anyway.

As she got closer, she smiled, though it barely hid her earlier animosity. “Janice, I didn’t realize you had such skills.”

“You’re flattering me. It’s just something I do for fun.”

Liliana’s expression changed just a little, but she kept her smile in place. “Fun? It looks more like a professional skill to me, something you must have trained for.”

Chapter 575:

“Take it or leave it.”

Liliana struggled to keep up her smile in response to Janice’s indifferent attitude.

“Kenneth, you rated my outfit earlier. How about rating Janice’s too?” Liliana suddenly turned to Kenneth, pulling him into the conversation. Since Janice had entered, Kenneth hadn’t taken his eyes off her. His gaze, though, wasn’t filled with critique; it was pure admiration. To him, both Janice and her outfit seemed like a work of art, a gift to the world.

Liliana's question, however, quickly snapped him back to the present moment. With a slight shake of his head, he replied, "I don't think it's necessary."

"Why not?" Liliana stepped closer, her tone cold and challenging. "I'm sure everyone here, plus the live stream viewers, are curious to know how you'd rate Janice's outfit."

Kenneth's frown deepened, his tone firm as he replied, "Your style and Janice's are different. There's no real need to compare the two."

Liliana, undeterred, shook her head slightly and pressed on. "Even if our styles are different, there's still personal taste involved. A person can always express their opinion about which they prefer."

"Liliana, honestly, both yours and Janice's swimsuits are great," Maggie interjected, trying to ease the tension, but Liliana wasn't hearing any of it. She was focused on proving herself superior to Janice.

Janice, feeling the pressure from Liliana's relentless persistence, let out a small, helpless sigh. Her gaze turned to Leonidas, who was watching from the corner, clearly enjoying the spectacle. This guy must have brought Liliana here on purpose just to make trouble for her.

Liliana wasn't much of a threat, but she was definitely a nuisance.

Leonidas caught her eye and grinned smugly.

In response, Janice raised her fist in his direction, causing Leonidas to frown in confusion.

Then, Janice shot him a defiant look and flipped him the finger.

Leonidas frowned, his eyes darkening. Janice's stubbornness remained unchanged. He wondered if she was aware that she had already fallen into his trap.

A sudden pop rang out, echoing around.

Looking over, Leonidas noticed a burst balloon on the floor next to him. He then saw Aiden, who flashed a mocking grin while waving at him.

Aiden held another water balloon in his hand.

It was evident that he had thrown the previous one.

All eyes were fixed on Janice and Liliana, unaware of the disturbance happening over here. This moment was perfect for Aiden to execute a secretive prank.

“Who would have thought that a man of your reputation would resort to such childish games?” Leonidas commented.

With a casual flick, Aiden tossed the water balloon. “Childish? I think it’s quite the diversion. It’s rare to see you so unsettled, Leonidas.”

Leonidas’s eyes narrowed, but before he had a chance to respond, Aiden threw another water balloon at him.

Chapter 576:

Leonidas dodged the first precise throw, but another balloon swiftly chased after him.

Aiden stood with a relaxed posture, a smirk playing on his lips. He was surprisingly at ease with his actions, which were unlike the person he used to be. But he believed it was all in good fun for Janice’s sake.

Bothering someone? Anyone could do that!

Aiden picked up two more water balloons, assessing their weight. With the others distracted, he launched them at Leonidas.

“Aiden Green!” Leonidas called out, about to seek help, only to see Aiden already close in front of him.

“Leonidas, asking for help doesn’t seem like you.”

“You’re toying with flames!”

“Sorry, but seems you’re the one flirting with death.” Aiden’s expression grew cold, and the smile disappeared from his face.

Leonidas stepped back, feeling a deadly intent radiating from Aiden. Was he out of his mind? They were broadcasting live. How could he take such a risk?

However, in the blink of an eye, Aiden had raised his foot and unleashed a powerful kick to Leonidas’ chest. With a resounding splash, Leonidas was propelled into the pool behind him.

This disruption finally captured everyone’s attention.

“Oh no, we need help! Leonidas has tumbled into the water!” Aiden shouted dramatically, and it became clear that their previous mischief had gone completely unnoticed.

“I’ll handle it!” Daniel quickly volunteered and dove into the water, heading toward Leonidas without hesitation. He was facing significant online criticism at the moment, and this presented an ideal chance to create a positive impression.

“Leonidas, there’s no need to be scared.”

“Who said I was scared?” Leonidas was already on his feet in the water, casting a fierce glare at Daniel.

Daniel was momentarily paralyzed by the unexpected scolding. When he finally snapped out of it, Leonidas had already exited the pool.

“Can’t stop laughing! It’s only a pool, not a death trap. Daniel’s really going overboard.”

“Poor Daniel, he only wanted to leave a good impression but ended up looking silly.”

“I genuinely feel sorry for Daniel. He attempted to help but ended up getting scolded.”

Online viewers were entertained as they watched Daniel, dazed in the pool, finding the scenario completely hilarious.

“Aiden, was this your work?” Janice whispered to Aiden, her voice low.

“I didn’t appreciate his attitude, so I decided to teach him a lesson,” Aiden said with a nonchalant shrug.

Janice paused, giving Aiden a second glance. “Something about you seems strange lately.”

“What?” Aiden stopped, his face a mask of confusion.

Chapter 577:

“Strangely appealing.”

Aiden was momentarily at a loss for words. Was this her way of flirting with him?

“Janice, we’re not done talking,” Liliana said as she walked up to them. Under normal circumstances, such an interruption would have been enough to stop the conversation. However, Liliana was determined not to drop the issue—without a definitive outcome, the competition could not proceed.

A hint of irritation passed through Aiden when he saw someone cut into his conversation with Janice. “Liliana, on what grounds do you believe you can match Janice?”

Liliana’s gaze hardened slightly as she met Aiden’s eyes. “Could you explain what you mean? Is Janice considered royalty that one needs special qualifications to challenge her?”

Aiden was about to respond, but Janice cut him off.

“It seems you won’t stop until Kenneth evaluates my attire.” Janice faced Kenneth and offered him a smile. “Kenneth, would you mind rating my outfit? Let’s not delay the performance for something so insignificant.”

But Devin was completely unfazed. He quietly hoped for more drama among the guests just like this.

Scenes like these delivered precisely what the show thrived on—entertainment and buzzworthy topics for lively debates.

Right now, the live chat was alive with debate, the audience passionately discussing the clash between Janice and Liliana.

“I’m growing frustrated with Liliana! Janice clearly wants to avoid wasting time, yet Liliana persists. Isn’t she just delaying everyone?”

“I can see where Liliana’s coming from. Since both have experience in fashion design, it’s only natural she would want to compete.”

“You must be kidding, right? Liliana’s behavior is totally out of line. With that outfit, does she honestly believe she stands a chance against Janice? It’s ridiculous.”

“Aiden’s absolutely right! Liliana just tossed on whatever she found, while Janice put effort into designing her own swimsuit. There’s no comparison between them.”

As Devin watched the argument escalate, he couldn’t help but think that the fiercer the clash, the more attention the show would attract.

Kenneth let out a long sigh, a trace of resignation threading through his tone. “Janice’s swimsuit? On a scale of one to ten, I’d say it’s a perfect ten.”

Liliana's eyebrows shot up in disbelief, her gaze snapping to him. "Even the president of Delgado Jewelry has his biases, huh? A ten? That's practically saying her outfit is flawless. Nothing in this world is perfect."

Far from offended, Kenneth turned to Janice with a calm, resolute expression. "I've said it before—perfection does exist. But it's relative. And in my eyes, Janice's outfit is impeccable."

His voice carried the conviction of a hammer striking a nail, leaving no room for debate.

Liliana's lips thinned as she crossed her arms. Of course, Kenneth would side with Janice. He always did. But a perfect ten? Really? Did he not consider how such blatant favoritism could tarnish Delgado Jewelry's reputation?

Chapter 578:

Kenneth didn't flinch under her scrutiny. Instead, a faint smile touched his lips. "I won't deny it—I'm biased. Everyone has their own standards of beauty. My rating reflects mine alone. And for me, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Even if Janice were wearing a plain white T-shirt today, she'd still earn a ten from me."

The declaration rippled through the guests, murmurs spreading like the first cracks in a dam. Yet Kenneth remained undeterred, his smoldering gaze locked onto Janice.

"Wow! Did he just confess?"

"How romantic! He just admitted his feelings for Janice. Talk about a plot twist!"

"I owe Liliana an apology. She wasn't being difficult—she was setting the stage for Kenneth's confession!"

Even the online viewers were ablaze with excitement.

The competition hadn't officially begun, yet here they were, swept into an unexpected drama. How could anyone not be thrilled?

Devin, observing from the sidelines, couldn't mask his shock. Kenneth's words, though not an outright declaration, left little room for doubt. He liked Janice, enough to see perfection in her, even in the mundane.

"Whoa, look at Aiden! His eyes are basically daggers," said an online viewer. "I'm the number one Aiden-Janice fan, and I demand Aiden say something! We can't let Kenneth steal the show like this!" said another.

Aiden's eyes indeed burned with quiet fury.

Why did Kenneth have to say so much when it was just about a rating? Unfazed by the commotion, Janice's lips curved into a polite smile. "Kenneth, your kind words are flattering. But no matter how poetic you make it sound, I won't be returning to Delgado Jewelry."

"What?"

Her response left the crowd stunned. Was Kenneth's entire speech just a ploy to lure Janice back to the company?

Aiden shot Janice a surprised glance. Her response had caught him off guard — rejecting Kenneth while deftly offering him an escape, sidestepping any awkwardness for either of them.

A sense of relief settled over Aiden.

Kenneth, despite the faint flicker of disappointment in his eyes, maintained a gracious smile. "Janice, losing you is a tremendous blow for Delgado Jewelry. But I respect your decision."

"Oh, come on! All that romantic buildup, and it's just about her returning to Delgado Jewelry?" a viewer asked.

“No way! That was definitely a confession from Kenneth!” another replied. “Aiden and Janice for the win! She turned him down for Aiden. That’s true love!” said a fan of Janice and Aiden.

“Devin, everyone’s here now. Can we begin?” Janice called out to Devin as she didn’t want to waste more time on trivial matters.

Devin jolted upright, fumbling for the megaphone. “Yes! Right. Guests, please... Come on! Who used up all the water balloons?”

His exasperation hung in the air as he gestured toward the dwindling pile of balloons in the corner.

Chapter 579:

Aiden, the clear culprit, remained entirely unruffled. He ushered Janice towards a lounge chair nearby.

“Aiden, was it you?” Janice asked, squinting at him with mock suspicion.

Aiden offered her nothing but a cryptic smile. “Looks like the showdown will take a while. You should sit and rest.”

But Janice was already piecing it together. Her lips curved into a knowing smirk as she recalled Leonidas’ dramatic tumble into the water earlier. It all clicked—Aiden must’ve seized the opportunity, sneaking off with the balloons while everyone was distracted by her and Liliana.

“Janice, I didn’t finish what I wanted to say earlier,” Aiden said.

“What?”

“You’re surprisingly eloquent.”

Janice rolled her eyes playfully and looked away. Of course, that wasn’t what he had meant to say earlier. It was Kenneth’s sudden confession and her tactful response that prompted his comment.

Nearby, the staff were scrambling to refill the water balloons while other guests used the lull to stretch and warm up.

The brightly colored chaos around them turned into a picturesque scene, drawing delighted comments from online viewers.

Liliana, however, was a study in contrast. Her expression was stormy as her gaze darted repeatedly towards Janice. To an outsider, it might've looked like admiration, maybe even infatuation, but those who knew better could sense the sharp edge beneath her stare.

"You're being reckless," a voice came from behind her.

Liliana stiffened but didn't turn. "What I do is none of your business. Besides, wasn't I brought onto this show to target Janice?"

"Come on, I didn't tell you to target Janice, but could you use your head for once? Quit flailing around like some loose cannon and attacking everyone indiscriminately." Leonidas' voice was low, chilly. "If you keep this up, you'll never learn her true identity!"

Lilian paused, her expression hardening. "I'm well aware of what's at stake here." A knowing smile crept across Leonidas' face. He knew JE was Liliana's idol and role model. It was because of her that Liliana worked so hard to get this far.

Over the years, Liliana had longed to meet and get to know JE, but JE remained elusive, her whereabouts shrouded in mystery. But Leonidas had exploited her obsession to his advantage, maintaining control and bending her to his will.

Cutting his gaze toward Janice, Leonidas pressed his lips together, a flicker in his eyes.

After a short while, the staff placed a large bucket of water balloons in front of everyone, while Devin stood beside it, ready to announce the rules of the next activity.

"Everyone, before you is a bucket of water balloons."

The participants flicked their gazes toward the bucket, puzzled. “Are we going to have a fight with water balloons?” Maggie asked, confusion clouding her face. “But you said we’d have a swimming duel.”

“Excellent question, Maggie,” Devin replied, pleased with her curiosity. “You’re right. You’ll be having a swimming duel, but I’ve added water balloons to spice things up. The water balloon fight will make the duel more fun and exciting!”

Chapter 580:

Online viewers were thrilled to see how the duel would play out with the added challenge of the water balloon battle.

“Devin sure knows how to spice things up! I can already picture a bunch of handsome men and beautiful women shrieking as water balloons rain down on them.”

“Devin totally gets us. We’re all here for the intense showdown of wet and wild beauties! Let’s get started already—I can’t wait!”

“Yeah, but it’s a bummer that Stephen isn’t participating. Look at him sitting on the sidelines in a diving suit, acting as a referee.”

Stephen pulled out a thermos and took a sip, looking every bit like a retired referee.

Janice had told him that drinking warm water could speed up his recovery, and he took her advice to heart, even bringing a thermos filled with it.

His fans were heartbroken, watching him.

Many of them clamored on the live chat to include him in the game. They tuned in to the program to see Stephen playing in the water and flexing his hot body, not sitting on the sidelines like a lonely bystander. Their displeasure surged once more, causing another wave of hateful comments on the live chat.

“Now, let me explain the rules,” Devin announced. “Male and female guests will pair up, just like last time, by drawing numbered balls. Guests with matching numbers will form a pair. Once the pairs are decided, there will be two rounds of duels. The winning pair from each round will move on to the final round to determine the winner. The last team standing wins the duel and earns the chance to enjoy a romantic date tonight. It is a tough game, but I expect everyone to give it their all!”

Devin waited for everyone to express excitement over the game, but they showed nothing, as usual. Awkwardness filled the air before Devin let out a sigh. Ordinary guests would have responded more eagerly for the camera, but the people in front of him were far from ordinary. They were the sponsors, so Devin had no choice but to suck it up and up his game.

“Oh, and one more thing—only the male guests fight in the duel. The female guests will use the water balloons to distract or hinder the other team from winning the round. You can use any means necessary to win, so long as you don’t violate the rules. Use the chance wisely.”

Devin paused, sensing something was off, but quickly refocused on the game. “Alright, let’s move on to the pairings. Everyone, please step forward to draw your numbers.”

Aaron, once again taking on the role of host, approached with two boxes—one red, one blue.

“Aaron, you’re quite the professional,” Janice teased as she walked over, unable to resist a playful jab. “How did a three-Michelin-star chef become a host of a dating reality show?”

Aaron chuckled awkwardly. “Times are tough. I’m just doing some part-time work to help with the bills.”

Janice rolled her eyes, unimpressed. She didn’t believe a word of his story—someone with the status of a three-Michelin-star chef wouldn’t struggle, no matter how bad the economy got.

But she couldn’t be bothered to pry into whatever secret he was hiding. Aaron smiled warmly as he handed the red box towards Janice. “Please pick a number.”