

Wrath 1081

Chapter 1081:

These newcomers executed their actions with precision, unflinching in the face of danger, motivated by a fierce commitment to their task.

"How can this be?" Disbelief filled Oliver's eyes as he witnessed the unexpected support for Janice.

Clad in black clothing and white masks that hid their identities, leaving only their eyes visible, these figures exuded a cold, unwavering determination.

"You're a tragic figure, Oliver," Janice said as she stood over Oliver with an intense aura that sent shivers down his spine. "Driven by your ridiculous obsession, you've crippled yourself and now see your kindest sister as your enemy. How foolish!"

"Enough!" Oliver exploded. "Minnie only cares about herself."

"You're wrong," Janice answered firmly. "Minnie is dedicated to the Payne family as a whole. She appreciates those who support her. You, on the other hand, are consumed by your own self-interest."

Oliver's eyes narrowed, a wave of panic fleeting through his heart before he regained control. "Hah, say whatever you want. It won't change anything. Even at the cost of my life today, I refuse to let this operation proceed."

"You're fooling yourself," Janice said with a helpless sigh. "You think you're fit to lead the Payne family, but your actions are nothing but selfish. What contributions have you made to the Payne family? You've crippled yourself, burdening the Payne family. You've secretly sabotaged Minnie's operations to prove your excellence, causing financial losses to the Payne family. You've even allied with enemies to weaken her position within the family. How do you justify being superior to Minnie?"

Oliver was taken aback by her words, each one hitting him hard, bringing up truths he had desperately tried to bury, leaving him overwhelmed by their harsh clarity.

“Oliver, do you honestly believe that no one knows what you’ve done?” Janice asked, casually playing with a scalpel. “Unlike Minnie, your plan is clumsy, and you can’t pull it off perfectly.”

“You’re trying to trick me into confessing!” Oliver snapped back to the harsh reality, his sneer cutting through the tense air. “Janice, enough talking. I won’t confess to anything you’re suggesting. Oh, and I forgot to mention something important.”

“Are you about to say that the Welch family won the bid this time?” Janice played with the scalpel, a menacing glint in her eyes.

Oliver felt a chill pierce through him at the sight. “How did you know?”

Janice pressed the cold scalpel against Oliver’s cheek. “Still think I’m tricking you? By now, the Welch family is probably scrambling to recover their shares. They’re likely trying to reach you for assistance, but here you are, powerless and at my mercy.”

“It can’t be! The Welch family was supposed to win; how could they possibly lose?”

“Why else would I suggest you’re not as competent as Minnie?” With a sigh, Janice signaled to a guard standing by. “Enough talk. Let’s start the surgery now.”

“No, you can’t do this. Janice, if you dare operate on me, I swear I’ll make you regret it.”

Chapter 1082:

Oliver’s threat was cut short as the guard administered the anesthesia. Within seconds, his defiant shouts faded into silence, and he slipped into unconsciousness.

Outside the operating room, Minnie and others waited anxiously, unaware of the drama unfolding within. They prayed for Oliver’s successful operation, hoping he would soon be able to stand again.

Yet, unbeknownst to them, Oliver desired to remain disabled. He preferred the limitations that kept him tethered to the Payne family, striving to match his brilliant sister and prove his own worth.

Aiden checked his phone, a slight smile playing on his lips as he absorbed the latest update. The Welch family was in disarray. Despite mortgaging additional shares, reclaiming them seemed an ever-distant possibility.

Recent data revealed that White Group had secured seventy percent of the shares, with the Welch family managing to reclaim only ten percent. The remaining twenty percent had been distributed among other entities.

The Welch family faced a considerable setback, their influence in Cloverhill notably diminished.

For Janice, this victory marked merely the first phase of her vendetta against the Welch family. Her next step was to penetrate their industries, aiming to completely dismantle the century-old dynasty.

"I've heard about it," Minnie commented, sitting next to Aiden. Aiden remained unfazed, subtly shifting to keep an appropriate distance between them.

Minnie's expression faltered; it was clear that Aiden's loyalty lay with Janice, showing little interest in other women, even a prodigy like her.

"This defeat has cost the Welch family dearly. They will need to maintain a low profile for some time, unable to wield their power as freely as before."

After a moment's silence, with Aiden still unresponsive, Minnie added, "Yet, the Welch family has deep roots in Cloverhill, with extensive connections across the city. Uprooting them completely will be a formidable challenge. The government won't permit such disruption easily."

Though Janice had previously secured the nod from Trenton, who agreed not to intervene as long as Cloverhill's stability wasn't threatened, other leaders might not show the same restraint.

The real challenge for Janice was just beginning.

The upheaval within the Welch family had started to impact the interests of influential figures, who were unlikely to remain idle.

“Miss Payne, you might want to focus more on your own family’s troubles,” Aiden suddenly interjected. “There’s a traitor in your family, yet here you are, concerned about others.”

“What are you implying?” Minnie asked, her brows knitting together in confusion.

Aiden looked at her with a trace of amusement. “Of the Welch family’s five hundred billion, a substantial sum originated from someone within your family.”

Minnie’s face fell. Despite her skepticism, Aiden’s confident demeanor made the accusation hard to dismiss.

A traitor in the Payne family, assisting their rivals, the Welch family?

Without hesitation, Minnie pulled out her phone and dialed Tricia. “Conduct a comprehensive review of all financial activities within the Payne family. I want every detail scrutinized.”

Chapter 1083:

Aiden raised an eyebrow, impressed by her decisive action. While he had only made a passing remark, most would dismiss such a claim. Yet, Minnie acted immediately, embodying the traits of a diligent family leader.

The light in the operating room then went off.

Everyone’s anticipation heightened as they moved closer, waiting for the door to swing open.

Just then, Minnie's phone vibrated—it was Tricia calling back, the timing of which filled Minnie with apprehension.

She braced herself for a revelation she might not be ready to confront.

"Minnie, lately, Oliver has been executing transfers. Though each transaction is small, the cumulative total is significant," Tricia said urgently.

Minnie's grip tightened on her phone as the doors to the operating room began to open slowly.

"We've tallied it—over ten billion dollars..."

Tricia trailed off, but Minnie grasped the implication: the ten billion dollars precisely matched the Welch family's financial shortfall.

"I see." Minnie inhaled sharply and ended the call, her focus shifting to Oliver as he was wheeled out of surgery.

Oliver was still under the effects of anesthesia, unconscious. With just a glance, Minnie turned her gaze to Janice, her face devoid of the joy that should have accompanied Oliver's successful surgery.

At that moment, Janice caught her look. Their eyes met, heavy with unspoken thoughts.

"Janice, how did it go?" Walter's voice broke the tension, laden with worry.

"The surgery was a success," Janice reassured him with a smile. "Once he's off the anesthesia, he should regain feeling in his legs. With about a month of recovery, he can begin rehabilitation."

“Really?” Walter was in disbelief. Oliver’s condition had been considered irreparable, yet Janice had managed a miraculous recovery. The scenario seemed surreal.

“My son can finally stand and return to his duties in the military.” Walter’s eyes filled with tears as he gazed at his son, his face a mixture of joy and relief, hopeful for Oliver’s future.

For Janice, Walter’s words carried an irony. Oliver had intentionally sought to disable himself to escape military duty.

“Minnie, you must know what your brother has done, right?” Janice whispered to Minnie. Minnie looked towards Oliver and nodded slowly.

“Yes, but accepting it is another matter.”

“That’s understandable.” Janice gently patted Minnie’s shoulder. “I trust you’ll manage these revelations wisely. It’s better for our families not to be adversaries.”

“Yes.”

Janice removed her surgical cap and exchanged a knowing glance with Aiden. Together, they left the hospital.

Chapter 1084:

The Payne family was poised for significant turmoil, and the consequences Oliver faced were no longer Janice’s concern.

The Payne family faced a stark choice: punish Oliver heavily or become the White family’s adversary.

Back in the car, Janice stretched out comfortably, her posture relaxed.

Aiden reached over to smooth a stray hair from her forehead, his voice soft. “It seems the surgery went quite well.”

“Indeed!” Janice leaned back, resting her cheek on her hand, her tone lazy. “Oliver’s situation reminds me of yours.”

“What do you mean?” Aiden raised an eyebrow. “I was pretending, while he was truly disabled. In what way are we similar?”

Janice shook her head. “Both of you chose disability for a purpose. However, his approach was more drastic. He staged a car accident to genuinely cripple himself and mislead Minnie.”

Aiden, taken aback by the severity of Oliver’s actions, touched his forehead in disbelief. “Is Oliver insane?”

“He’s perfectly rational, just excessively extreme,” Janice replied, detailing the events in the operating room to Aiden.

Aiden, aware of the tension in the operating room, hadn’t envisioned such a plot. “Now that you’ve restored his ability to walk, he’s bound for military service. The Payne family’s connections in politics and business ensure their prominence. For Minnie to secure her leadership and consolidate her authority, he can’t dodge his duties. But for him to conspire with the Welch family, their avowed foes, is sheer lunacy.” Aiden sighed deeply. The longstanding feud between the Payne and Welch families showed no signs of easing, with both sides reluctant to bridge their deep-set differences.

Yet, Oliver crossed this line by aligning with the Welch family against his own, indirectly damaging the Payne family’s interests. This alliance would inevitably drive a wedge between the two families.

“Now it’s in Minnie’s hands,” Janice murmured, her eyes nearly closed. “I’m confident she’ll handle it adeptly; otherwise, she wouldn’t live up to her reputation for brilliance.”

Aiden remained neutral. “The Welch family has faced significant losses; they’re bound to react soon. I imagine they’ll seek you out for discussions.”

A spark of interest lit Janice's eyes. She leaned toward Aiden, smiling. "You're thinking along the same lines as I am. Our tactics have certainly put the Welch family on edge. They're too disorganized right now, too fragmented to risk further conflict."

"So, if they do approach you for negotiations, will you consent?"

"Absolutely," Janice replied, her eyes narrowing with a sharp intensity. "Not only will I agree to meet them, but I'll ensure it's done publicly and assertively."

Minnie had assembled the core members of the Payne family in the meeting room.

"Minnie, why did you call this meeting so suddenly?" asked Ricardo Payne, a rugged-looking man with a full beard. He was Walter's younger brother and Tricia's father.

Chapter 1085:

The other Payne family members looked equally perplexed. With Oliver's surgery successfully completed, they had expected a celebration—not a formal meeting.

"Ricardo, take it easy," Walter said with a smile. "Since Minnie called us here, it must be for something important." Turning to Minnie, he gestured for her to begin.

Minnie lowered her gaze, her expression conflicted. Walter caught her hesitation and frowned.

"Minnie, did something happen? Is this about the Hillford project? But we already withdrew from it. Even if there's an issue, it shouldn't involve us."

Minnie lifted her head and met Walter's gaze. "Unfortunately, it does."

"What do you mean?" Ricardo asked, his brow furrowing. "Minnie, just say it. You're making me anxious." The others also grew serious.

Over the years, Minnie had brought substantial benefits to the Payne family, earning their trust and reliance. Seeing her troubled expression now was unsettling.

“The Welch family was short more than ten billion dollars, but an unknown benefactor covered the gap,” Minnie said evenly. Her words sent a wave of unease through the room. “And that benefactor is from the Payne family.”

Gasps of disbelief filled the room.

“That’s impossible! We’re sworn enemies with the Welch family. Who would be foolish enough to help them?”

“Minnie, are you sure about this?”

They all silently hoped there had been some mistake—they couldn’t accept the fact that there was a traitor among them.

“Take a look at these documents.” Minnie passed them around, and as the family members read through the details, their expressions darkened.

“This is outrageous. Whoever did this split the funds into multiple transactions to avoid detection,” Walter snapped. “If Minnie hadn’t investigated, we wouldn’t have uncovered it so quickly.”

“Who is responsible?” Ricardo demanded, his face tightening.

With anger, Walter said, “When I find out, they won’t get away with this.” All eyes turned to Minnie.

“To move that much money, it has to be someone with significant influence in the family,” Walter said suddenly, his voice heavy with suspicion.

He scanned the room, his gaze assessing each person. A tense silence followed before the others reacted with offense.

“What’s with that 100k? I hate the Welch family. They’ve done everything they can to crush us in their bid to become Cloverhill’s top family. If I had the chance, I’d destroy them.”

“Exactly! The feud between our families has lasted for generations. We were raised with this rivalry. There’s no way any of us would betray our own blood.”

“So, Minnie, who is it?” Walter turned to her with a deep frown. “You wouldn’t have called us here unless you knew exactly who was responsible. You wouldn’t act on mere suspicion.”

Chapter 1086:

“It’s Oliver.”

The room fell into stunned silence.

Disbelief came first, followed by shock, then anger.

“Oliver? Your own brother? But why would he do this?” Ricardo asked, his voice filled with incredulity. “What was he thinking?”

“That doesn’t make sense! Oliver has been incapacitated, and we’ve done everything to help him recover. He has no reason to betray us!” Murmurs of doubt filled the room.

The idea of Oliver being the traitor seemed too absurd to believe.

Walter had cast suspicion on everyone earlier, but none of them had thought to question Oliver. He had always been gentle, kind, and sensible. To think he could turn against them was difficult to accept.

Without a word, Minnie handed out more documents.

She didn't try to explain or justify anything—letting the evidence speak for itself was far more effective.

Walter scanned the pages, his expression darkening with shock and disbelief.

The others reacted the same way, their faces stiff with silent astonishment.

“Did Oliver orchestrate the car accident himself?”

“Has he completely lost his mind? He went to such extremes just to avoid military service?”

“But wasn't he the one who adored Minnie the most? Why would he betray her now?”

Everyone believed that Oliver displayed his devotion to Minnie as though she were royalty, always treating her like a cherished princess. However, this affection was nothing more than a facade.

Minnie took a deep breath, her eyes clouding with anger. Upon discovering Oliver's connection with the Welch family, she started to uncover the complexities of her brother's life.

She confronted truths she had once avoided, revealing a side of Oliver that contradicted the affection he had always shown.

There was a moment when Minnie wished she could continue living in blissful ignorance, preserving the image of her protective brother and herself as the adored princess.

However, once the scandal shattered this illusion, she understood there was no turning back. For the sake of the Payne family and her brother, she had to make a decision.

“Let’s discuss how we’re going to deal with Oliver.” Minnie initiated the difficult conversation, her tone steady.

The room filled with tension as everyone hesitated, each member wary of voicing their thoughts.

Oliver had always been well-liked, and the revelation made it difficult for them to even consider taking disciplinary action.

“Perhaps we should overlook this incident. Oliver’s actions were likely due to feeling cornered,” one of them tried to defend Oliver. “Remember, he was once expected to lead as Walter’s eldest.”

Chapter 1087:

“True, Oliver’s heart isn’t corrupt. It wouldn’t be fair to punish him harshly for one mistake,” another person added.

“Oliver has only just had surgery. Maybe a serious talk with Walter would be enough,” suggested another.

While Minnie listened, Walter and Ricardo stayed silent. They knew well that Minnie was angry, and not just mildly so.

“Very well,” Minnie responded with icy composure. “Proceed as you suggest. Let my father simply speak to him.”

A collective sigh of relief swept through the room, as those present believed Minnie prioritized familial bonds enough to avoid severe consequences, especially...

Against her own brother. “However, I intend to inform Janice about our decision.” Her next words sent shockwaves through the room.

Eyes widened in astonishment as they looked at Minnie. “Why bring Janice into this?”

In their eyes, Janice was a fearsome presence, a powerful figure with many identities and immense authority.

The last thing they desired was to cross someone of her stature.

“Do you actually believe Janice doesn’t know about this?” Minnie scoffed. “Let me remind you—the truth came to light because Janice gave me a hint. She’s already well ahead of us. Remember what happened to the Welch family after they crossed her? She responded by bringing them to their knees. Now, imagine her reaction knowing a traitor from the Payne family sided with the Welch family in a bid.”

This revelation filled them with a deep sense of fear.

Their priority was to maintain a friendly relationship with Janice, avoiding anything that might anger her.

They remembered how mercilessly Janice had handled the Welch family. The same fate could await the Payne family if she saw them as turning against her.

“I’ve said what I needed to say. Now, the decision is yours.” With that, Minnie stood up and made her way to the exit.

“Minnie, where are you going?” one of them asked urgently. “We should continue this conversation. You’re practically leading the Payne family now, so we’ll trust your judgment.” He then winked at the others.

“Absolutely, Minnie. Just give us your decision on how to deal with Oliver, and we’ll back you up.”

“Indeed, Oliver may seem kind and honest, but in reality, he’s secretly full of deceit,” another added sharply.

Just as expected, the atmosphere in the room shifted from earlier pleas for leniency to demands for strict action, revealing their true intentions to Minnie.

On the surface, the Payne family appeared united, but beneath that, each member put on a show of camaraderie while secretly pursuing their own interests. They were happy to maintain the illusion of solidarity as long as it benefited them personally.

But now, with their interests on the line, they dropped the facade, with each member vocally prioritizing their own agendas.

Chapter 1088:

Walter let out a helpless sigh, his eyes meeting Minnie's, where he saw a mix of disappointment and frustration.

As her father, his instinct was to offer comfort, but he couldn't bring himself to, knowing his own pursuit of power and wealth disqualified him from offering true support.

At the same time, the Welch family was on the brink of collapse, struggling through immense challenges.

Their resentment toward Janice was clear, yet they had no choice but to endure the weight of their situation.

"Isn't Orson stepping in?" a voice shouted in frustration. "Our family is falling apart, losing allies one after another. If this continues, we might lose our status as the top family."

"The top family?" Calvin let out a scoff, shaking his head. "Given the current landscape, we've lost that title long ago. In fact, even the Payne family, with its long-standing influence, wouldn't dare claim the number one spot."

At his words, a cold shiver ran through the room. Everyone's thoughts turned to the White family.

But how could that be? The Whites had only recently settled in Cloverhill. How could they have risen so swiftly to the pinnacle of power? It was a reality no one wanted to acknowledge.

And yet, the undeniable truth loomed before them. With the backing of JE Consortium and powerful foreign allies, the White family's influence was nothing short of terrifying. Their strength had been on full display in the recent confrontation, and the results had left no room for doubt.

"There's no need to panic," Gilmore interjected, his voice heavy with exhaustion. "The White family may be formidable, but much of their strength comes from external forces. If they truly want to cement their place in Cloverhill, they'll have to contribute significantly here."

"But isn't the Hillford project enough?" someone muttered helplessly. "Once that project is completed, the White family's influence will skyrocket. The higher-ups will take notice, and from that moment on, their status as Cloverhill's most powerful family will be indisputable."

A weighty silence settled over the room.

Once, the Welch family had a golden opportunity to solidify their power, to rise even further. But before they could even grasp it, the White family had crushed their ambitions beneath its heel.

For Mateo, the blow was especially bitter. It wasn't just about elevating the Welch family—he had also intended to weaken the grip of Hughes, Randall, and Cason. Yet, after all the chaos, the very power he had sought to distribute had now fallen firmly into the hands of the White family.

"Mateo, we need to arrange a meeting with Janice," Gilmore said.

Mateo stiffened, turning to Gilmore with a look of disbelief. "You're not seriously suggesting reconciliation, are you?"

Gilmore met his gaze and gave a slow, solemn nod. "The Welch family no longer has the strength to oppose Janice. If we want to maintain our foothold in Cloverhill, we have only one option—peace. Otherwise..." He trailed off, unwilling to speak the rest of the grim reality aloud.

Chapter 1089:

Once, they were the unseen rulers of Cloverhill, wielding enough power to destroy families, to make or break lives with a single command.

Now, they stood on the edge of ruin, staring down the same fate they had so often inflicted upon others.

"Never!!" Mateo's face twisted with rage, his eyes blazing. "We have never suffered such humiliation, and now you expect us to bow our heads to the Whites? If we surrender, what will the other families think of us?"

Murmurs of agreement filled the room. To them, Gilmore's suggestion was nothing short of madness.

"I have always acted in the best interests of the Welch family." Gilmore remained composed. "Right now, seeking reconciliation is the most strategic path forward. If Janice is willing to spare us, we will have time to recover, to rebuild."

"Gilmore, shut up!!" Mateo's glare could've cut through steel. "As the head of the Welch family, I refuse to accept your decision. If the White family wants a fight, we'll take it to the end. They may have dealt us a blow, but if they think they can bring us down, they're sorely mistaken. They've got a long way to go."

Gilmore exhaled quietly, suppressing a sigh. In that moment, he understood why Orson had never entrusted the full reins of the Welch family to Mateo. Bold? Yes. But wisdom? Severely lacking. He acted on impulse, and his recklessness had led them straight into disaster. The family's current predicament was a direct consequence of his shortsightedness.

"Calvin!" Mateo barked.

"Find Bart for me. He's responsible for this catastrophe, and I'll see to it that he pays the price."

“Understood.”

Calvin turned on his heel, ready to carry out the order—until movement at the entrance froze him mid-step.

A figure strolled in, unhurried and composed. The moment Calvin registered who it was, his pupils contracted in sheer disbelief.

“Bart?”

Heads whipped toward the doorway.

As soon as they confirmed it was indeed Bart, a ripple of outrage swept through the room. The seething frustration bottled up within them now had a target.

Yet Bart, unfazed by the palpable fury, merely smirked and sauntered forward, his every step oozing nonchalance. With effortless arrogance, he sank into a chair, making himself at home.

“I know you’re all furious,” Bart said. “But let’s hold off on the threats for a second.”

“I’ve actually brought some good news.”

“You’ve caused immense losses to the Welch family, and you still dare show your face here? I should carve you into pieces.” Mateo’s jaw clenched, his voice a low growl.

Bart’s smirk only widened. He squinted, raised his hand, and snapped his fingers.

A wave of figures in black, clad in tight-fitting combat attire, poured into the room, forming a silent yet formidable perimeter.

A collective chill spread through the Welch family. Their estate was fortified like a fortress, so how had these people infiltrated it so effortlessly?

Chapter 1090:

Bart leaned forward slightly, the smug grin still plastered on his face. "Now then, can we all calm down and hear me out?"

Gilmore narrowed his eyes as he studied Bart, his mind already working through the implications. "It seems fortune has smiled upon you. You've managed to find yourself a powerful backer."

"Sharp as always, Gilmore." Bart chuckled, tilting his head in mock admiration. "That's why Orson trusted you—you see things others miss."

Gilmore's stare didn't waver. "Who is it?"

A hint of amusement flickered in Bart's eyes. "Someone you know."

"Someone we know?"

The members of the Welch family looked puzzled, struggling to recall anyone who could support Bart and pose a challenge to them. Mateo's face suddenly changed, a realization dawning on him as he clenched his fist. "Are you talking about Leonidas?"

"Bingo!" Bart snapped his fingers and grinned broadly. "The man backing me is Mr. Miller. He's well-informed about the Welch family's current predicament. If you keep clashing with Janice head-on, you'll be utterly crushed."

He raised a finger and wagged it slightly. "So, I'm here to represent Mr. Miller and guide you to a more prudent course."

“Get out!” Mateo slammed his hand on the table, his anger boiling over. “We will never negotiate with a traitor.” Previously, Mateo had approached Leonidas to target JE Consortium, but Leonidas had refused and even thwarted his plans. Now, Leonidas had the audacity to send Bart here, assuming he could manipulate him.

“Mateo, do you think you have a choice?” Bart sneered, fully expecting Mateo’s vehement reaction. “The Welch family has deep roots, and you still possess the audacity to face off against Janice despite losing so many stocks. But have you considered the consequences?”

Bart’s words struck a nerve with every member of the Welch family present.

To date, the Welch family had been compromising their interests. Continuing on this path meant that even a victory would feel hollow. By then, various powers, especially the Payne family, would likely reveal their intentions and overrun them completely.

The Welch family had accumulated many adversaries over the years. Without their formidable strength, they would have been dismantled long ago.

“Mateo, perhaps we should talk about this,” someone suggested. “The Welch family is in dire need of strong allies, and the other factions are too weak to assist. But the White family has allied with the Payne family. If we fight against them, we’ll be at a disadvantage.”

“Yes! Let’s see what Bart has to offer. We might uncover some valuable insights.”

Several Welch family members pressed Mateo, who was seething, his eyes ablaze with fury.

Yielding to Bart, once merely his underling, was a bitter pill to swallow. It was a deep humiliation to even contemplate such a compromise.

Despite the mounting pressure from everyone around him, Mateo found it difficult to resist, given the Welch family's dire situation and Leonidas' proposed solution.