

Wrath 721

Chapter 721:

Conley's face lit up with malicious joy. "You fool! Go to hell! Meet your beloved down there!"

But a moment later, the twisted grin on Conley's face morphed into a look of terror.

Jorge clutched the steering wheel, steadying the car as he let the tires slide into the gutter.

Screech.

The sound of intense friction filled the air as the car finally aligned at the correct angle.

Then there was a loud bang.

As its tires sprang out of the gutter, the yellow Lamborghini shot away like a bullet.

Conley gaped as Jorge executed a maneuver he deemed impossible for such a supposed fool.

"This can't be real!"

His eyes flashing with determination, Conley stepped on the accelerator, eager to overtake. Yet, he hadn't fully completed his maneuver. As his speed increased, his car skidded out of control towards the mountain's edge.

A sharp cry escaped Conley as his red Lamborghini smashed into the mountainside.

The spectators fell silent, shocked by the abrupt turn of events. Conley, once the undisputed king of the White Goose Mountain course, had wrecked his vehicle on the critical final bend, squandering his lead.

Janice watched the entire episode unfold on the screen with a slight, knowing smile. Jorge was driven by a deep-seated anger and a desperate need to win, risking it all in the race. Conley, on the other hand, was overly confident yet overly cautious about risking his own skin. Facing Jorge, whose determination knew no bounds, how could he expect to prevail?

This was why Janice had remained calm and assured throughout.

The debris had been cleared, and the mountain path was open again.

Before long, Jorge's yellow Lamborghini rolled back to the start. Onlookers viewed the heavily damaged sports car, withholding their scorn.

The dents and damage weren't mere blemishes but proud badges of a fierce victory.

"Four minutes and thirty seconds, can you believe it? He didn't just set a new record; he shattered the old one by almost a minute."

"It's absolutely insane!"

"Incredible. I can hardly believe it!"

Still in a daze, Jorge pulled the car into park.

His body shook as he absorbed the reality of his feat, feeling like he was living in a dream.

He had done it.

He had beaten Conley and shattered the existing record.

"Jorge, Jorge!"

The roar of the crowd snapped Jorge back to the present. As he observed the enthusiastic faces around him, his eyes cleared and a modest smile crept across his face. This was reality, not a fantasy. He had indeed succeeded.

With a click, Jorge swung open the car door and stepped out. He then lifted his right fist into the air, a gesture of victory. “Whoa! Jorge is invincible!”

Chapter 722:

The crowd converged, rallying around him. Those who had once clung to Conley were now avidly supporting Jorge.

As he cooled off, Jorge caught the eyes of Janice and Aiden. Approaching them, he bowed deeply.

“Thank you. Thank you for this opportunity to best Conley. I am at your service from this moment forward.”

Janice quirked an eyebrow, sharing a look with Aiden that seemed to convey, “See, we’ve got ourselves a new lackey.”

With Jorge now working for them, gaining insights into the Welch family and managing affairs in Cloverhill would undoubtedly be more straightforward.

“Huh. What’s happening?” Vernon stirred, coming to with a start. As he became aware of the commotion outside, confusion crossed his face. “How did I end up falling asleep?”

He rubbed his head, struggling to piece together how he had lost consciousness. Then it hit him—Janice had delivered a knockout blow. Vernon climbed out of the car, anxious about what had transpired. Yet the scene before him was astonishing.

“Did we win?”

Vernon's eyes widened as he noticed Jorge was the center of attention, while Conley was conspicuously absent. The crowd's admiring looks toward Jorge clued him in on the outcome.

"That's incredible! We actually pulled it off!" Vernon was thrilled, though a bit disappointed. "It's a shame I missed the climax. I wish I'd seen it."

"What are you talking about? There's a complete video of the race. You can catch the replay later." Janice rolled her eyes at Vernon.

"Oh, that's right." With a broad smile, Vernon dashed off to get the race footage from the broadcast team.

At that moment, Conley was making a slow return in his red Lamborghini. The crowd's reaction to Conley had changed dramatically, now filled with scorn instead of respect.

Conley's expression was grim, his humiliation and rage simmering unchecked.

"Conley, time to make good on your bet," Janice said coolly as she approached him.

Conley exited his car, his expression severe, his hands balled into fists. "Conley, you're not considering reneging on your bet, are you?" Vernon crossed his arms. "Look around. Everyone's watching. Surely you wouldn't tarnish your reputation over a building and a simple agreement, right?"

"Conley wouldn't do that," Jorge replied, his gaze intense as he stared down Conley. "He once told me that only cowards fail to keep their bets. Conley considers himself strong. He wouldn't dishonor his commitment."

Conley's gaze hardened, filled with intense anger as he faced Jorge. How had he been outdone by Jorge? He still remembered his triumph over Jorge, who had looked utterly defeated. Yet, here was Jorge now, not just victorious but openly gloating about his win, which felt like a direct blow to his pride.

"Relax. It's just a building; it won't cost me my honor." With a flick of his fingers, Conley called Aron.

“Conley, how may I assist you?”

“Bring me the deed for the Eternity Building. I’m transferring it to MO this instant,” Conley instructed.
“Let’s consider the Eternity Building my gift to MO.”

“Ha-ha!” Vernon couldn’t contain his laughter. “You really have no shame. You lose, and suddenly it’s a ‘gift’? Do you take us for fools?”

Chapter 723:

Conley attempted to maintain his composure, but Vernon relentlessly belittled him, crushing any semblance of dignity. The murmurs of the others filled the background.

“Conley just can’t accept his defeat! He was so arrogant before, and now he’s humbled.”

“Jorge’s the one to follow. He gave it his all to secure this win. Truly an inspiration.”

“Between the powerful Lambert and Mendoza families, we need to choose the winner, not a loser.”

These whispers only made Conley’s face grow darker.

“Enough from all of you!” Conley shouted coldly. “You’re just opportunists. Forget about being in my good graces from now on!”

“Conley, time to honor your bet. It’s pathetic to see a loser cause such a scene. Jorge didn’t complain when he lost to you.”

“Move quickly, Aron!” Conley barked.

“Right away!”

Aron dashed to the vehicle, pulling out a portable printer to print the contract. These people, often involved in high-stakes car races, routinely wagered properties, necessitating such equipment for swift ownership exchanges.

“Here is the transfer contract for the Eternity Building. Please, take a moment to review it,” Aron said as he handed over the document. Vernon accepted the contract, scrutinizing it thoroughly. Satisfied with its contents, he passed it to Janice.

“Alright. I’ll sign it later in the name of my company,” Janice said.

Conley’s expression darkened, yet he held his tongue. The ownership of the Eternity Building was now MO’s decision after winning the bet; his role was merely to formalize it by signing.

“Now, let’s talk about that second bet,” Vernon continued.

Conley’s demeanor tensed as he recalled the stakes of their subsequent bet, a wave of dread washing over him. He instantly regretted his impulsive gamble.

Vernon said, “Let’s revisit the second bet you proposed to MO. You agreed to fulfill any request she had and even to serve as her slave should she win.”

Conley staggered backward, his face draining of color as the crowd looked on with great delight.

Typically, Conley carried himself with an air of arrogance, often belittling others when they crossed him. But today, he found himself on the receiving end of such treatment.

“What’s going on?”

The inquiry came from behind him.

The crowd turned to see two young women emerging from the Cullinan. “Conley, you need to stand up for us! We were nearly killed just now!” Esther exclaimed as she gleefully latched onto Conley’s arm.

“Minnie and I were here to see you set a new record, but on our way, we nearly got hit by two cars. I had to swerve sharply to avoid a crash.”

“That your car just now?” Conley’s eyes widened in disbelief as he looked at Esther.

“Yes!” Esther nodded and gestured towards Minnie. “Minnie was there too.”

Noticing Minnie, Conley’s face paled, filled with embarrassment and a wish to vanish from sight.

The onlookers recognized Minnie as the heiress of the Payne family, one of Cloverhill’s three venerable families, known as much for their lineage as for their influence.

Chapter 724:

It was well-known that Minnie was both highly educated and strikingly attractive, having turned down many eligible bachelors.

Conley was one of those rejected suitors.

Now, to be seen in such a humiliating state by Minnie was akin to being publicly shamed.

Janice’s eyes moved to Minnie, admiring her poised and elegant nature. She thought highly of Minnie, seeing her as a refined and composed individual.

Turning her attention to Esther, Janice sensed that Esther was more headstrong and indulged, a sharp contrast to Minnie’s composed demeanor.

“So, you two are siblings!” Vernon burst out, his laughter sharp and mocking as his eyes flicked to the panic etched across Conley’s face. Sensing an opportunity, he seized it. “One of those cars you spotted earlier belonged to your brother. Seems like your brother values victory more than your life. How tragic is that?”

“What? My brother almost crashed into us?” Esther’s eyes widened, disbelief flooding her face as she turned to Vernon.

“Exactly! Just look at your brother’s face. He can’t even hide his shame for leaving behind his own sister.” Vernon shook his head, clearly entertained by the drama.

The crowd followed suit, their whispers growing louder and sharper as they judged Conley.

“Unbelievable! Conley risked his sister’s life for a race. What kind of brother does that?”

“Good thing his sister is okay. Otherwise, he’d be in big trouble with his family.”

“If I had a brother like that, I’d trade him for a different one in a heartbeat.”

Conley’s face turned from pale to flushed as he listened to the accusations.

“Esther, I didn’t realize it was you. If I had known, I swear—”

“So you only help people you recognize and ignore others in need?” Minnie cut Conley off, fixing him with a cold stare. As sharp as ever, she quickly pieced the situation together.

“It looks like Esther exaggerated when she praised how outstanding you are. You’re nothing more than someone who sacrifices others’ safety for your own gain.”

“Minnie, it’s not what you think,” Conley rushed to explain.

He wasn’t serious with his ex-girlfriends. But with Minnie, he was sincere, partly to align with her influential family, and partly because no other woman could compare to her.

“Minnie, please don’t be upset. Maybe there’s been some misunderstanding.”

Esther was angry, too. But Conley was her brother. Determined to forge a marital relationship between the Mendoza and Payne families, she had to defend him.

“Esther, if it hadn’t been for that masked man, we’d be dead.” Minnie scowled, her frustration clear. “I’ll make sure our families hear about this. Conley’s not walking away from this.”

“Minnie, come on. You’re my closest friend. Can’t you give my brother a chance, just for my sake?” Esther pleaded, holding Minnie’s hand. But Minnie was known for her unyielding stubbornness. Once she made a decision, no one could sway her.

Besides, she never liked Conley. Despite his sterling reputation with the Mendoza family elders, she couldn’t ignore the unsettling feeling he gave her. The car accident that had just occurred only validated her instincts.

“Hold up!” Vernon’s voice cut through the rising tension, drawing everyone’s attention to him. “You can argue all you want, but Conley’s got another bet to settle.”

Chapter 725:

“Another bet?” Esther paused, her gaze blank as she looked at Vernon. “What bet?”

“The one he owes after losing the race.” Vernon smirked mockingly. “He already signed over the Eternity Building to us, but there’s more.”

“That’s ridiculous!” Esther snapped. “My brother doesn’t lose. He’s the king of the White Crane Mountain trail. He holds every record here.”

“Miss Mendoza, your brother lost to Jorge,” Vernon stated.

“What?” Esther’s eyes widened in surprise. She spun toward Jorge, her eyes narrowing. “That loser? He beat my brother?”

“Mind your words, Miss Mendoza. Jorge won fair and square. If you don’t believe it, I’ve got the footage of the race,” the drone operator said, ready to broadcast the race.

“No. I don’t believe it! You’re lying!” Esther turned to Conley, desperation creeping into her voice. “Say something! Tell me they’re lying.”

Conley clenched his fists, shame suffocating him. He couldn’t meet Minnie’s eyes. Her icy stare felt heavier than the crowd’s judgment.

“Esther, your brother still lost the race, even after leaving us behind.” Minnie’s tone was flat, as if she were merely stating a fact. But to Conley, it carried the sting of mockery.

“Conley, please say something!” Esther urged.

“I lost the race!” Unable to withstand the invisible pressure any longer, Conley finally snapped.

“Now, Conley, announce what you’re going to do.” Vernon chuckled darkly.

Conley lifted his head, his gaze drifting to Janice. With heavy steps, he walked toward her.

Minnie’s attention was drawn to Janice. The sight of her left Minnie momentarily taken aback.

Janice wore a golden mask, with only her eyes and red lips visible. Despite the mask, her striking figure and the aura she exuded made it clear that she was no ordinary person.

Minnie and her family had been carefully trained from childhood to excel in discerning the character and status of others, making their evaluations exceptionally precise. It was immediately apparent to Minnie that Janice was of high status; she radiated an undeniable presence.

As Minnie’s gaze shifted to Aiden, who stood next to Janice, her expression changed again.

Aiden, too, carried a commanding presence. The combination of his and Janice's energy created an aura of complete synchronization. Though his face was hidden behind sunglasses and a mask, there was an undeniable air of regality about him.

Wait a moment.

Minnie's brow furrowed in confusion. Why did Aiden look so familiar to her?

A fleeting memory surfaced—another masked figure, this one without sunglasses, whose eyes had left a lasting impression on her.

"Conley, what are you doing?" Esther's sharp voice broke into Minnie's thoughts.

At that moment, Minnie saw Conley beginning to bend his knees, seemingly about to kneel before Janice.

"Miss Mendoza, your brother once declared that he would fulfill any request from MO should he lose the race, even to the extent of becoming her slave."

"That's absurd! As the heir of the Mendoza family, such a degrading condition would never be accepted by him," Esther retorted, her gaze burning into Janice and her associates. "Regardless of your identity, if you try to humiliate my brother, our family will not stand idly by."

Chapter 726:

"Mr. Mendoza, since your sister insists..."

"Esther, stop!" Conley interrupted, his eyes shut tight, weighed down by embarrassment.

Ignoring the terms of the wager and invoking the Mendoza name to intimidate would only tarnish his own dignity. He would lose all self-respect.

"I acknowledge my defeat," Conley said, his voice strained. "Now that I'm committed to this bet, I must fulfill it. Are you going to have me live in disgrace, Esther?"

"Conley, you promised to be someone's slave!" Esther cried out in despair. "If our father learns of this, it could be the end of you!"

"That's not for you to worry about," Conley said firmly, looking towards Janice resolutely.

Janice raised her hand and said, "I'll hold you to the initial terms of your bet—to comply with my wishes. But as for the part about being my slave, disregard that. I have no use for one."

Conley was visibly relieved by Janice's leniency. "So, what do you require of me?"

Janice turned to Jorge, who stood nearby, and said without emotion, "Jorge, it's your call. After all, you were the winner in our race."

"MO?" Jorge gasped in shock. His eyes, wide with disbelief, sought Janice's.

"Just remember your words."

Nodding with newfound understanding, Jorge bowed respectfully to Janice. "Understood."

He then swiveled, retrieving his phone from his pocket, and presented the display to Conley.

Conley's reaction was subtle yet noticeable as his eyes narrowed at the image of Samantha, Jorge's former girlfriend.

"Conley, I demand that you kneel and apologize to Samantha!" Jorge said, his voice shaky and his eyes glistening with unshed tears. The weight of the phone seemed immense in his trembling hands. Samantha had been the love of his life, but his arrogance made him lose her forever.

Haunted by remorse, he had drowned his sorrows in endless nights out.

He had longed for vengeance, for a chance to right the wrongs done to Samantha.

Conley had always seemed an unbeatable foe, an oppressive presence in his life.

Now, victorious at last, Jorge saw Conley brought low, experiencing the humiliation he once felt.

"I'm sorry. I was wrong!"

Rather than becoming Janice's slave, Conley chose to kneel and apologize to Samantha. He knelt in front of her image, bowing deeply. "I am truly sorry," he said solemnly.

Jorge burst into a mixture of laughter and tears, his body swaying. "Samantha, can you see this? He's apologizing to you on his knees."

"You scoundrel! How dare you degrade my brother?" Esther shouted at Jorge, her finger jabbing the air. "Your ex was nothing special. She's gone, so quit your drama!"

A sharp slap echoed through the air as Jorge's hand struck Esther's cheek firmly. "Utter one more disparaging word about Samantha, and I'll make you regret it."

Esther recoiled from the intensity in Jorge's gaze, clutching her cheek, tears streaming down her face.

"Let's go," Janice said, placing a reassuring hand on Jorge's shoulder before walking away with Aiden and Vernon.

Chapter 727:

Taking a deep breath to steady himself, Jorge hurried to his weathered Lamborghini and raced to catch up with Janice's sleek black sedan.

Esther's scream of rage and despair filled the air as she watched them drive away.

Beside her, Minnie offered a consoling pat, her eyes lingering on the fading taillights of Janice's car.

Could the mysterious man in sunglasses be her rescuer?

A black sedan moved slowly along a rarely traveled road. A yellow Lamborghini, its body marked by past collisions, followed closely behind. Both cars seemed to move in sync, as if silently agreeing on their pace.

Inside the black sedan, Janice held her phone, listening intently to Jorge's voice from the other end.

"MO, I apologize, but I'm unfamiliar with the history of the White family. However, I once heard that the White family's sudden downfall happened because of a woman."

A woman?

Janice's brow creased in thought at his statement. Could it really be that a woman was behind the downfall of the White family? Who might this woman be?

She ran through the names of the White family members in her mind but couldn't recall anyone fitting that narrative.

"Do you have more to add?" Janice asked.

Jorge responded truthfully, "That's all I know. I was too young back then to understand the events. Besides, over the years, neither the Welch family nor anyone else has discussed it. The only reason I know this is because an elder mentioned it when he was drunk."

Janice massaged her temples. She hadn't expected Jorge to provide much insight into those historical events, so she felt no disappointment at his lack of detailed information.

“Jorge, now I have a question for you, and I need you to be completely honest.”

Jorge replied, “Go ahead. I’ll share whatever I know.”

“What would it take for you to lead the Lambert family?”

Inside the Lamborghini, Jorge’s eyes narrowed sharply, a look of surprise mixed with suspicion crossing his face, as if the question from Janice was the last thing he expected.

“Actually, I’m working with Harlan to compete for the Lambert family leadership,” Jorge said in a low tone. “The only other contender is my brother, Patton. He’s sharp and has a natural talent for business, which has helped the Lambert family’s company thrive. I, on the other hand, am often viewed just as a playboy, good for nothing. Most people believe my brother is the rightful successor.”

As she listened, Janice asked another question. “What drives you to compete for leadership of the family?”

“Initially, I hadn’t planned on pursuing the leadership role. But after what happened to Samantha, I became determined to exact revenge on Conley. Since I couldn’t defeat him in racing, I figured I could use the family’s influence to get my revenge on him. That’s why I decided to challenge for the leadership.”

Janice let out a soft sigh, feeling the weight of it. It was clear that Jorge’s feelings for Samantha ran deep. His main goal, whether pushing the boundaries in racing or fighting for control of the family, was to seek revenge for Samantha.

“I understand. From this point forward, I’ll help you secure the leadership position,” Janice declared.

Chapter 728:

“What?” Jorge was completely taken aback upon hearing her words. “Are you serious? You can actually help me become the head of the family?”

“Yes,” Janice answered. “The contest for leadership between you and your brother boils down to your capabilities and your potential to elevate the Lambert family further. I’ll provide you with the chance to demonstrate your worth. However...”

Here, Janice let her voice trail off, leaving her thoughts incomplete. Jorge, as sharp as ever, immediately understood what she was hinting at—she wanted him to promise his commitment.

“I promised to follow your guidance, and I will stick to that promise. Whether you support my attempt to take the lead or not, my stance will remain firm. I can swear on my love for Samantha.”

“Very well then!” Janice replied with a faint smile. She then turned to Vernon and said, “Pull over.”

The car slowly came to a stop.

Jorge followed suit and brought his car to a stop as well.

“Jorge, you must continue to work for Harlan and serve as an informant for me. But we’ll need to take some safety measures, which may be somewhat uncomfortable for you.”

“No problem.”

Janice ended the call and exchanged a significant look with Aiden.

Aiden nodded, opened the car door, and moved toward Jorge. At that moment, Jorge stepped out of his car, eyeing the imposing man approaching him anxiously.

“Jorge, someone as ineffective as you doesn’t belong anywhere near MO. So, get as far away as you can.”

“I sincerely want to serve MO. I’ll do whatever it takes to remain by her side.”

“Enough!” Aiden let out a hiss before flashing a threatening smirk. He took a step forward, grabbed Jorge by the collar, and pulled him close. “Do you think I can’t see through your game? You’re just one of Harlan’s pawns, pretending to be loyal to MO while planning to spy, aren’t you?”

“No, please trust me...”

Aiden then landed a powerful punch on Jorge with a loud thud. Jorge screamed in pain, his mind spinning as he fought to regain his sense of direction.

Aiden gave Jorge no chance to recover, landing another punch that sent him flying. Jorge lay on the ground, gasping for air, struggling to get up.

“MO helped you not to make you his pawn, but to use you to humiliate Conley. People like you can’t handle public embarrassment, can you? Now that you’re of no use, just get lost and stop being an eyesore.”

After that, Aiden turned sharply and strode back to the black sedan.

Jorge dragged himself upright, watching the sedan's taillights fade into the darkness as rage bubbled in his throat. "You bastard! How dare you treat me like this? You won't get away with this humiliation!" He hauled himself toward his car, but when he turned the key, his Lamborghini remained stubbornly silent. Blind fury took over as his fist crashed against the steering wheel.

"Argh!" The primal roar echoed through the empty street as his eyes blazed with uncontrolled rage.

Knock, knock!

The sharp rapping against his window pierced the silence. Jorge spun around, his eyes widening at the familiar face—Farris Molina, Harlan's assistant.

Chapter 729:

"Farris?"

"Mr. Lambert, I noticed you've been stationary here for quite some time. Might you need assistance?"

"What a coincidence." Jorge forced his lips into an awkward smile. "But I'm fine, really. I'll just call for a ride."

"Please, Mr. Lambert, allow me to offer you a ride. The streets are rather deserted at this hour. Finding another ride could prove challenging." A warm, practiced smile played across Farris' features.

“Well, if you’re insisting...” Jorge conceded with a heavy sigh.

One undeniable fact weighed on his mind. As Harlan’s most trusted assistant, Farris’ sudden appearance in this desolate spot, at this ungodly hour, reeked of calculation rather than coincidence. And MO’s guess was right.

Harlan had been monitoring his movements, and he likely knew about the White Goose Mountain incident, suspecting his loyalty. This “chance” encounter with Farris was nothing but a carefully laid test.

The journey ended at an upscale nightclub, its neon lights cutting through the darkness.

“Farris, why bring me here? My reputation might precede me, but I don’t indulge without purpose,” Jorge asked.

“Mr. Lambert, please get out. Room 403,” Farris’ response was clipped, offering nothing but the stark numerals.

Jorge’s lips tightened into a thin line before morphing into a bitter smile. Wordlessly, he complied.

The Govis Nightclub stood as Cloverhill’s premier entertainment destination, a familiar playground where Jorge had spent countless carefree nights. Tonight, however, each step felt leaden with foreboding.

The corridor seemed endless before he finally reached Room 403.

Drawing a steadying breath, Jorge rapped his knuckles against the door.

A muffled voice granted entry, and he pushed the heavy door open.

The spacious room held just one occupant—Harlan.

“Mr. Welch.”

Jorge’s greeting carried the weight of respect tinged with fear. He remained frozen at the threshold, his eyes reflecting a complex mixture of reverence and dread.

“Jorge, let’s not stand on ceremony.” Harlan’s smile was honey over steel as he gestured towards the empty seat. “Thank you, Mr. Welch.”

Jorge eased the door shut and crossed the plush carpet, settling into the sofa across from his host with barely concealed tension.

“Please, have a drink.” With practiced grace, Harlan poured deep red wine into two crystal glasses. His refined movements and genteel manner could almost make one forget the power he wielded.

Jorge accepted the glass with reverence, nodding repeatedly like a puppet on strings. “Thank you, Mr. Welch.”

“Word reaches me that MO intercepted you tonight. Something about White Goose Mountain and a race with Conley?”

“Yes.” Jorge’s hand trembled noticeably around his wineglass. He knew better than to attempt deception. “I was terrified at first, thinking I was their target. But they merely expressed interest in visiting White Goose Mountain. The race with Conley is pure coincidence, nothing more.”

Chapter 730:

“Coincidence?” Harlan adjusted his glasses with deliberate slowness, his gentle smile evaporating like morning dew. His eyes turned to razor-sharp slits behind the lenses.

Suddenly, his arm shot up, the wine bottle becoming a brutal weapon as it crashed against Jorge’s skull.

With a loud crash, the bottle shattered, scattering glass everywhere. Harlan’s aristocratic features contorted into something primal and savage.

“Jorge, do you take me for a fool?” Harlan’s eyes bore into Jorge with predatory intensity. “MO helped you win the race. Word travels fast about your touching pledge of loyalty.”

Blood trickled down Jorge’s temple, but terror froze his hand at his side. His words tumbled out in desperate haste. “Mr. Welch, please, you misunderstand! I only pledged loyalty to infiltrate MO’s inner circle, to be your eyes and ears. But she’s like a fortress—impenetrable. She never gave me a real opening. Look!” He pointed to his battered face. “Her people did this to me!”

He looked utterly aggrieved. “Mr. Welch, my loyalty to you is absolute, unwavering. You promised me the Lambert family leadership. What possible reason would I have to betray that?”

Harlan took a measured sip of wine, his piercing gaze never wavering, clearly not easily convinced by Jorge’s words.

“Mr. Welch, no matter how skilled MO is, at the end of the day, she’s just a doctor. Why would I ever side with her?” Jorge spoke hurriedly, his voice laced with desperation. “You’re the only one who can actually help me. I’m not stupid. I know exactly where my loyalty should lie.”

Harlan narrowed his eyes, silently studying Jorge. Then, out of nowhere, a smirk curled on his lips. “Alright, I believe you. Get up now.” He stepped forward, offering his hand to pull Jorge to his feet. “Don’t take it personally. These are dangerous times. The last thing I need is a traitor lurking in the shadows.”

“I get it.” Jorge forced a weak smile. “As long as I have your trust now, I can deal with a little rough treatment.”

“Guards,” Harlan called out.

At once, the bodyguards stationed outside stepped in.

The sight of them sent a shiver down Jorge’s spine. If Harlan had deemed him a traitor just now, these men would have ripped him apart without hesitation.

He had seen firsthand how Harlan handled his enemies. Harlan would simply hand them over to his bodyguards, and after that, they would disappear without a trace—almost as if they had never existed.

Being a member of the Lambert family meant nothing. The Welch family still controlled the fate of the Lamberts, just as they had erased the White family overnight—so thoroughly that no one even dared to whisper their name anymore.

“Get some ice and bandages. Treat Jorge’s injuries.”

“Right away!” The bodyguards quickly brought ice and bandages, then gave Jorge basic first aid.

Jorge pressed the ice pack against his face, trying to numb the sharp sting. Harlan might have accepted his loyalty, but the fear in his eyes hadn’t faded.

“Here, have a drink. It’ll settle your nerves.” Harlan passed him a glass of wine, motioning for him to take a sip.

Jorge knew better than to refuse. He took a cautious sip.

“You understand what’s at stake if MO actually manages to heal Orson, don’t you?” Harlan asked.