

Wrath 751

Chapter 751:

“Leave.”

The director nodded, bowed, and quickly exited the room.

A moment later, there was a knock at the door.

“You can come in!” Mateo called out, turning to see Jorge walking in.

“Jorge, I trust the information you’re about to share is entirely the truth,” Mateo said, sitting down. His presence seemed to chill the air around him.

“Mr. Welch, I am now committed to MO’s service. I only followed Harlan to catch him in his own lies. However, I had not expected the backup plans he had in place.”

In Mateo’s presence, Jorge felt a tightness in his chest. He was overwhelmed by Mateo’s commanding demeanor.

Mateo studied Jorge carefully, assessing the sincerity behind his words. “We need proof that Harlan was behind all this.”

“Here you go,” Jorge quickly said, passing his phone over. “Harlan reached out to me with text messages.”

Mateo glanced at the phone, reviewing the messages linked to the assassination plot. A sneer then formed on his face. “Harlan, that bastard, is cautious as always.”

“Is there a problem?” Jorge asked.

Mateo threw the phone back to him and said coldly, "The number you've been contacting isn't Harlan's."

"NMI-lat?" Jorge was shocked. He looked in disbelief at the messages on his phone. "How can that be?"

"Nothing's impossible! Harlan wouldn't be so stupid as to use his actual number for such contact. Even though all signs point to him, he can simply claim it was an impersonation."

As Jorge listened to Mateo's reasoning, he understood the depth of Harlan's cunning and cursed him internally for being such a trickster.

"Oh! I had a meeting with him before..."

"That's pointless." Mateo stood and straightened the blanket on Orson's bed. "You have no proof of that meeting."

Jorge appeared gloomy. "That sly old man," he muttered. "He probably planned to pin the blame on me from the very beginning."

Mateo turned, giving Jorge a mocking look. "You were wise to seek refuge with MO. Otherwise, you might have ended up dead."

Jorge stayed quiet. Regardless of the outcome of the assassination, Mateo would have been furious and taken action against all involved.

If Jorge had not sided with MO and distanced himself from the assassination attempt, he might not have had to endure Mateo's anger, as MO would have likely eliminated him first.

"Mr. Welch, does this mean there's nothing we can do against him now?"

Mateo's expression was serious, his eyes shimmering with a cold determination. "Although we can't directly tie Harlan to the assassination attempt on MO, we can link him through Tess. Harlan had Tess

conduct surgery on our father. There was a medical mishap during the procedure that almost ended his life. Harlan will face serious consequences for that alone.”

Jorge’s eyes brightened, and he eagerly responded, “I’m ready to support whatever action you plan.”

“You?” Mateo looked at Jorge, his lips curving into a faint smile. “Jorge, can I really trust you?”

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Jorge’s face tensed. He then realized that his shift to MO’s side and his betrayal of Harlan could make it hard for Mateo to trust him.

“I am committed to MO and have vowed to follow her lead. However, when it comes to the assassination, you can trust me without question.”

“Just because Harlan attempted to kill MO?”

“Exactly!”

Mateo shook his head. “Jorge, the Lambert family has relied on the Welch family, but now, you’ve chosen to side with MO. This complicates things.”

“I’m prepared to sever ties with the Lambert family.”

Mateo’s expression darkened. Jorge was ready to completely break away from the Lambert family and dedicate his loyalty solely to MO.

“Why are you doing this? MO just helped you achieve a significant victory over Conley. Do you really need to cut ties with your family? Besides, with your current abilities, I could help elevate you to head of the Lambert family,” Mateo said.

Jorge’s lips curved into a genuine smile, his features softening with unexpected serenity.

"I've never harbored any real interest in leading the Lambert family. The position only appealed to me as a means to leverage the family's influence to challenge the Mendoza family. Everything I did was for Samantha, to ensure Conley would pay for his actions. Now that MO has helped me fulfill that wish, the position of family head holds no meaning for me."

Mateo arched an eyebrow, those words forcing him to reassess everything he thought he knew about Jorge.

The man before him had once been Cloverhill's notorious playboy, infamous for his arrogance and reckless behavior. But now, Mateo saw the truth—it had all been an elaborate mask, a carefully crafted facade. By playing the role of the useless playboy, Jorge had diverted attention away from his true intentions, buying himself time to pursue his real objectives.

"It's a shame," Mateo sighed, shaking his head. "Your brother may have talent, but the business world is a shark tank. Theory alone won't keep him afloat. If I had to choose between you two to lead the Lambert family, you'd have my vote."

"You're too kind, Mr. Welch."

Mateo's lips twisted into a sneer. He cast a sideways glance at Orson and said, "Let's go. It's time we settled things with Harlan."

At this moment, Gilmore sat in quiet contemplation in his home. An air of tranquility surrounded him.

Bang!

The door flew open with explosive force.

Mateo stormed in with Jorge following close behind.

Without so much as looking up, Gilmore retrieved two cups and poured coffee with practiced grace.

"Mateo, have some coffee. You need to cool down," Gilmore said, sliding a cup toward him before finally raising his eyes to meet Mateo's gaze.

Mateo's face was carved from stone, his eyes blazing with barely contained fury. In one fluid motion, he strode forward and swept the cup off the table with savage force.

Bang!

The porcelain shattered against the floor, coffee spilling across the white surface.

"Gilmore, where have you hidden Harlan?" Mateo's voice trembled with barely contained rage.

Chapter 753:

He had rushed to the hospital only to find Harlan's room empty—his brother vanished without a trace. Only Gilmore could have orchestrated such a flawless disappearing act right under his nose.

"Mateo, I don't understand what you're talking about." Gilmore met his brother's gaze with practiced composure, his features a masterpiece of serenity. "Harlan's an adult. I can't control where he goes."

A cold laugh escaped Mateo's throat as he leaned forward, bracing himself against the table. His eyes bore into Gilmore like sharpened daggers. "You're slipping, Gilmore. Your neutrality is wearing thin. Perhaps when Father wakes up, we should discuss stripping you of your current power?"

Gilmore squinted, his hand pausing. "Mateo, I truly don't know where Harlan is. Maybe... he has made a mistake and needs time to reflect?"

"Enough!" Mateo cut through the air with his words, refusing to entertain any more of Gilmore's diplomatic dance. "You know damn well the magnitude of Harlan's mess. He deserves nothing less than hell itself. Yet here you are, taking his side, spiriting him away to God knows where. I can't fathom why you'd stick your neck out for worthless trash like Harlan. Don't forget that I'm the one in charge now. Once Father wakes up, he will hand all his power over to me. Are you really going against me for that waste?"

Gilmore maintained his composure, pouring himself another cup of coffee. He took a measured sip.

“Mateo, do you really think Father will hand over his power to you once he wakes up?”

“Why not? I was the one who snatched him from death’s clutches. Even if hesitation crosses his mind, my supporters among the elders will guide him to the right decision.”

Gilmore chuckled, as if tasting something bittersweet. “Enlighten me, Mateo—have you ever pondered why Father bestowed upon you merely an honorary title, withholding any real authority?”

Mateo’s expression changed. He then turned to the others in the room and thundered, “Clear the room. Everyone.” Jorge nodded and left with the others.

But before the door was about to close, he discreetly placed a listening device on a nearby vase.

Once everyone else was out, Mateo sat down, his gaze cold and fixed on Gilmore.

“Don’t look at me like that. I’m your brother,” Gilmore said calmly. “These petty feuds only serve to fracture our strength, leaving us vulnerable to that bastard child.”

Mateo’s face paled. “Someone from the White family survived?”

Gilmore nodded. “Mateo, if this power struggle within the Welch family was merely between you and Harlan, I could maintain my neutrality. But there’s a bastard child lurking in the shadows. Regardless of who emerges victorious between you two, you’ll both unwittingly play into that bastard’s hands.”

With practiced grace, Gilmore slid a cup of coffee across the table toward Mateo.

The words struck a chord deep within Mateo’s chest as he carefully weighed their veracity. His instincts urged him to accept this truth. After all, what else could explain why Orson, already standing at death’s threshold, still clung so desperately to his power?

Perhaps he had already chosen his successor—someone other than the three brothers.

A flash of understanding crossed Mateo's eyes, and Gilmore's lips curved into a knowing smile. "Mateo, I've arranged for Harlan's relocation. He'll be leaving the country under cover of darkness tonight. When MO questions his whereabouts, simply explain that he fled to escape retribution. Tell them you exhausted every resource to apprehend him, yet he managed to slip through your grasp. Then redirect the blame elsewhere. I'm certain MO will find this explanation satisfactory."

Chapter 754:

Gilmore's eyes narrowed to calculating slits as he fixed Mateo with an intense stare. "Mateo, we must present a united front against external threats now."

Darkness clouded Mateo's features as bitterness and resentment roiled within him. Orson's favoritism was undeniable. How could he show such concern for an illegitimate child, even considering handing over the Welch family's legacy to a bastard?

Mateo drew in a deep breath before seizing the cup and draining its contents in one swift motion. He cast a meaningful glance at Gilmore, rose silently, and strode from the room.

As Mateo's figure receded, an icy smile played across Gilmore's face. "Mateo, don't hold this against me. Every action I take serves the greater good of the Welch family."

"Mr. Welch, what's our next move? Should we continue pursuing Harlan?" Jorge asked Mateo, noting his grim expression. Curiosity burned within him about the conversation he'd missed. He needed to devise a way to retrieve the listening device to uncover what had transpired between them.

"Target the Mendoza family!" Mateo's voice carried steel. "They are complicit in this assassination attempt, and they must face the consequences."

Jorge froze momentarily as realization dawned. Mateo intended to absolve Harlan while shifting the blame to the Mendoza family. But when had the Mendoza family become entangled in this web? Could Conley be behind this?

After suffering such a crushing defeat at the White Goose Mountain race, Conley certainly had cause for vengeance. Yet from Jorge's experience with Conley, despite his arrogance and brashness, he wasn't one to stoop to such underhanded methods. His battles were fought purely on the racetrack.

"Mr. Welch, I've been struck by a sudden stomach pain. Would you mind if I rejoin you later?" Jorge grimaced, feigning discomfort. Lost in his own thoughts, Mateo barely registered the request. "Go on then."

He proceeded to lead the remaining group away.

As their footsteps faded, Jorge's attention shifted back to the room. How could he retrieve the listening device now? With Gilmore still occupying the room, a direct approach was out of the question.

Inside, Gilmore continued sipping his coffee, lost in thought. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. Gilmore's brow creased slightly as he commanded, "Enter!"

Jorge eased the door open, plastering on an ingratiating smile. "Mr. Welch, I have a matter of utmost importance to discuss with you."

"A matter of importance?" Gilmore's lips curled into a contemptuous sneer. "Jorge, has betrayal become second nature to you? First Harlan, now Mateo... Do you truly believe I'm so easily deceived?"

Though Jorge's facade briefly cracked, he maintained his composure. "I simply believe in seizing profitable opportunities when they arise."

Gilmore scoffed. "What reward could be worth such treachery?"

"I'm now working for MO," Jorge replied. "After the assassination incident, I've gained even more of her trust."

Gilmore regarded Jorge with cold indifference, his silence speaking volumes.

An unsettling tension crept over Jorge. Though Gilmore projected a gentler aura than Mateo or Harlan, there was something far more intimidating about his quiet authority—an invisible force that seemed to press down from all sides.

“I’m sure you’re well aware of MO’s influence. With my position at MO’s side, I could be your eyes and ears, feeding you invaluable information. Think of the possibilities such intelligence could offer you. The Welch family already stands among society’s elite, but who wouldn’t seize an opportunity to reach even greater heights? Armed with insider knowledge about MO, the Welch family could gain unprecedented leverage, forging powerful alliances that were previously out of reach.”

Chapter 755:

Jorge fell silent, letting his words hang in the air. He knew the art of negotiation well enough. Saying more now would only diminish his bargaining power if Gilmore’s interest hadn’t been piqued.

Gilmore’s fingers drummed a light rhythm against the table, and then, almost imperceptibly, a smirk curled at the corner of his lips. “Well, well. Consider my interest piqued. But tell me—what makes you so certain that MO will see you as an asset?”

Jorge chuckled, exuding confidence. “That’s simple. For the next three days, MO will remain in Cloverhill, awaiting Orson’s return to consciousness. In that window of time, I’ll prove exactly why I matter to MO.”

“Alright.” Gilmore leaned back, nodding. “You’ve got three days to make your case. Impress me, and I’ll make sure you get what you want. Whether that’s claiming the Lambert family’s throne or wiping out the Mendoza family, I have the means to make it happen.”

“Much appreciated, Mr. Welch.” Jorge dipped his head slightly in gratitude. “If there’s nothing else, I’ll take my leave.”

“Go ahead.”

Jorge’s nerves were taut as a bowstring, his peripheral vision snagging on the vase by the door. Without breaking stride, he drifted closer, his fingers subtly plucking the tiny listening device nestled behind it.

“Got it!”

Elation surged through him. Whatever intel the bug had recorded would no doubt be invaluable to MO.

“Hold it right there.”

Just as his foot crossed the threshold, Gilmore’s voice cut through the air like a knife.

“Mr. Welch, is there something else?” Jorge asked, turning back to meet Gilmore’s piercing gaze. Had he been caught? Jorge’s heartbeat thundered in his chest. No. He couldn’t let a single crack show. One misstep, and he was as good as dead.

“What did you just take from the vase?”

“Huh?” Jorge blinked, feigning ignorance. “I didn’t take anything.”

Gilmore’s gaze darkened, his voice dropping to a menacing chill. “Hand it over. Now. Or you won’t leave this room alive.”

With a heavy thud, Jorge dropped to his knees. “I was only checking if that was the vase my father was interested in buying.”

Gilmore’s footsteps echoed ominously as he approached, looming over Jorge like a predator savoring its prey.

“Do I look like an idiot to you?”

Jorge’s breath hitched. Then, like a coiled spring, he exploded into action. His fist shot towards Gilmore, aiming straight for his jaw.

Gilmore's eyes widened in surprise—he hadn't expected Jorge to attack him. At the last second, he jerked his head back, the punch whizzing past him by a hair's breadth.

Jorge didn't wait for a counterattack. He spun on his heel and bolted for the exit.

As he sprinted, he yanked out his phone, his fingers flying over the screen as he sent a message to Janice.

Suddenly, a deafening gunshot ripped through the air.

Jorge's body jerked violently. His legs faltered, the world tilting sideways as he crashed to the ground.

Chapter 756:

Gilmore brandished the handgun, his expression as cold as steel, and strode over with measured steps. His sharp gaze fell on Jorge, who lay writhing on the ground, convulsing as life slowly drained from his body. "Jorge, you had so many paths before you. Why choose the one that leads straight to the grave?"

But Jorge, far from despair, let a faint smile creep onto his lips. There was no fear in his eyes.

In that moment, he saw her. The woman he had loved beyond reason. "Samantha, you've come for me, haven't you?"

Gilmore crouched, patting down Jorge's pockets with practiced efficiency, but turned up nothing of interest.

His gaze flickered to the phone lying beside the dying man. Picking it up, he noticed a message had just been sent, but Jorge had erased it. The only certainty Gilmore had was that the message had been sent to MO.

"Guards," Gilmore barked.

At once, a cluster of bodyguards rushed to his side.

“Send him to the Lambert family. Tell them Jorge was caught trying to assassinate MO and was executed on the spot by her.”

“Understood!”

At the dock, the moon hung high like a silent witness, casting its silver glow over the restless waves.

A shadowy group moved like phantoms through the night and reached a secluded boarding point.

“Sir, the boat will be here in fifteen minutes. We’ll have to wait it out.”

Harlan stood stiffly, his jaw clenched. The very idea of running away left a bitter taste in his mouth. “This is all over a damn doctor with a bit of a reputation? Even if Mateo has lost his mind, he wouldn’t go so far as to have me killed. Worst case, I would have to cough up some compensation.”

“Gilmore arranged this escape for your own safety. Mateo may be in charge of the Welch family, but Gilmore sees the bigger picture.”

Harlan exhaled sharply. He hated to admit it, but the man had a point. Orson had granted Gilmore a neutral stance, acknowledging his keen strategic mind. Regardless of whether he or Mateo rose to power, Gilmore’s role remained unchanged—a master tactician, guiding the Welch family towards even greater dominance.

It was also a subtle means of keeping Gilmore’s ambitions in check. Although Gilmore had explicitly declared no interest in the head position, who could say with certainty that his ambitions would never shift?

If Gilmore ever took the helm, his cold and calculating nature would ensure that nothing stood in the way of the family’s advancement—not even his own brothers.

“MO, I won’t let you off the hook.” Harlan gritted his teeth, the sharp pain in his lower back serving as a constant reminder of his injury. The doctor had warned him—his chances of leading a normal sex life might be permanently damaged. “Let’s end this right here, right now.”

Suddenly, a calm, icy voice cut through the air.

Harlan’s face contorted in shock as he watched figures in black, their faces masked, emerge from the darkness, surrounding him and his men.

A woman adorned with a golden mask approached, her eyes casting a sharp, frosty gleam. “MO? What brings you here?”

Janice fixed her cold stare on Harlan, looking at him as though he were already a ghost. “Take them down!”

Chapter 757:

With a swift gesture from Janice, her followers surged ahead. Dressed in black, with masks concealing their faces, they moved with the stealth and precision of night assassins, evoking a deep fear of death.

“Stop them now!” Harlan yelled, backing away.

However, his injury hindered his escape. The abrupt movement reopened his wound, causing blood to stain the bandage wrapped around his waist.

“Ah!” Harlan screamed in pain, his legs buckling before he fell to the ground.

Pale and writhing in agony, he dragged himself forward, determined not to stop.

“Harlan, weren’t you eager to settle our scores? Why are you running now?”

A chilling voice reached Harlan’s ears, making him tremble and his eyes widen in terror as if he had heard a demonic murmur.

He turned to see Janice's eyes, cold and menacing beneath her golden mask, more daunting than before.

"Master MO, this is all a grave misunderstanding." Despite his ghastly complexion, Harlan managed a groveling smile. "I had no part in any assassination plot. It was Conley. Yes, Conley! He has harbored resentment since you embarrassed him on White Goose Mountain, so he wanted to kill you."

Janice chuckled darkly before suddenly grasping Harlan's wounded side.

The sharp pain caused Harlan to reel, his mind swirling with confusion. "Master MO, you once said the stabbing was merely a warning. I've steered clear of trouble since. Why pursue me still?"

"You're correct. That stab was indeed a warning," Janice said, her lips twisting into a sinister smile. "But it was a warning not to flee. I intended for you to remain exactly where you were until I was ready to end your life."

Harlan's eyes narrowed as he began to thrash desperately, disregarding the intense pain in his side.

Confronted with the face of death, he summoned all his strength, driven by the urgent need to escape MO, the fearsome woman. A heavy thud resonated.

Janice delivered a forceful blow to the back of Harlan's head, rendering him unconscious.

"Simply killing you would be too merciful. I want you to endure a lifetime of retribution for hurting Aiden."

Janice rose to her feet, looking over the scene of the conflict.

The men Harlan had brought with him were sprawled lifelessly across the ground.

“Dispose of these bodies and leave no evidence behind.” She then looked down at Harlan’s prone form.
“As for him... mutilate his tongue, mar his face, and send him to that infernal place.”

“Understood!”

Ding!

The sound of a notification cut through the night.

Janice retrieved her phone and saw it was a message from Jorge.

She scowled and opened it, only to find a single word: stomach.

“What is this?” Janice pondered whether Jorge had sent the message in error.

As she was about to dismiss it and put her phone away, a sudden insight dawned on her, altering her expression dramatically.

“Something has happened to Jorge!”

Chapter 758:

Meanwhile, the entire Lambert family had assembled in the courtyard. Expressions of anger and grief were visible on every face.

A body, concealed under a white cloth, had lain in the center for the past thirty minutes, yet no one had the courage to reveal it and confirm who it was.

The fear was palpable; lifting the cloth might expose a truth too harsh to bear.

“I’ll do it.”

A man with gold-rimmed glasses stepped forward.

He was a tall, handsome figure, carrying himself with dignified poise. This was Patton Lambert, Jorge's brother.

He walked over to the body, crouched down, and with a firm grip, pulled back the cloth.

As the fabric fell away, exposing the corpse, cries of anguish filled the courtyard of the Lambert family's residence.

"Jorge. It's really Jorge!"

"My son!"

"Jorge!"

These mournful shouts deeply affected Patton.

He held onto the cloth tightly, his gaze filled with a blend of rage and despair.

Even though Jorge had a poor opinion of his younger brother, known for his reckless car racing and arrogance, Patton still recognized him as family.

The sight of Jorge, now lifeless, brought excruciating pain to Patton, almost driving him mad with grief.

He understood then how deeply he had truly cared for Jorge.

"Patton, we must avenge him! We will get justice for your brother, no matter what it takes!" Hank Lambert, the head of the family, said through bloodshot eyes and clenched teeth.

“I will!” Patton draped the white cloth back over Jorge’s body. Rising slowly, his tone was steady yet filled with hatred. “No matter how reputable MO is, I will bring her to justice.”

A pall of grief hung over the Lambert family’s estate as news of Jorge’s tragic death spread through the family.

Raw hatred blazed in every pair of eyes as the Lamberts, united in their fury, yearned for immediate vengeance against the murderer.

“Patton, what are you going to do?” Hank approached his eldest son, lines of worry etched deeply into his weathered face. “MO wields tremendous power among the elite. I fear...”

Though the Lambert family commanded respect in Cloverhill, their influence paled in comparison to MO’s far-reaching authority.

MO was someone the elites scrambled to befriend. Gaining her friendship was akin to gaining an extra life. Orson was a living example. Without MO’s timely assistance, Orson would have met his end within the month.

“Father, her status means nothing. She murdered my brother. Justice must be served.” Venom dripped from every word Patton spoke, his hatred palpable.

Hank stood stunned. Never had he witnessed such raw fury from Patton.

To the outside world, the brothers had always maintained a careful distance, their relationship seemingly fractured beyond repair.

Reading his father’s thoughts, Patton let out a laugh devoid of warmth. “Father, I can see right through you. Whatever strife existed between Jorge and me was family business. Blood is blood. He was murdered in cold blood, and as his brother, I won’t rest until his killer pays for this atrocity.”

Chapter 759:

Hank's brow furrowed as MO's overwhelming influence weighed heavily on his mind. Just as he moved to temper his son's rage, he caught himself. The Lambert family's gradual decline could be traced to his own hesitation, his reluctance to take decisive action.

Perhaps Patton's steel resolve was exactly what the Lambert family needed in this dark hour.

"Sir, there's someone at the door requesting an audience." A guard burst in, breathing heavily.

"At this hour?" Hank's frown deepened. "Who?"

"She calls herself MO!"

The name sent electric shocks through everyone present.

"Perfect." A dangerous smile played across Patton's face, vengeance burning behind his gold-rimmed glasses. "I needn't hunt her down; she delivers herself to justice. Today, she'll answer for her crimes."

"Make her pay!"

The proclamation ignited a fire in the Lambert family. As one, they marched toward the main entrance, united in purpose.

Meanwhile, Janice, who had sensed Jorge's peril and later confirmed his body's return to the Lambert family, raced to reach them. As she rushed forward, her mind raced through the pieces of this deadly puzzle, forming a theory that grew clearer with each step. Jorge had been her trusted ally—logic dictated that Mateo couldn't be the killer.

Orson hadn't woken up yet, and Mateo wouldn't be that foolish to offend her at this time. Given that Mateo would likely go to Gilmore's residence upon discovering Harlan's disappearance, all signs pointed to Gilmore as the murderer.

But what could possibly drive Gilmore to commit murder?

Janice's thoughts spiraled deeper until revelation struck like lightning. Jorge must have stumbled upon something he was never meant to see—a secret so damning that Gilmore felt compelled to permanently silence him.

It seemed out of character for someone as calculating and reserved as Gilmore to eliminate Jorge, especially knowing his connection to her. The cryptic, unfinished message Jorge had sent her suddenly carried new weight, lending credence to her theory about him discovering Gilmore's secret.

"MO!"

The harsh cry shattered her concentration like glass.

Janice lifted her gaze to find the Lambert family advancing like an angry tide, with Patton leading their charge.

"You murdered my brother and have the audacity to show your face here? Are you here to mock the entire Lambert family?" Patton's voice carried enough venom to kill from twenty paces.

"I didn't kill your brother."

"How dare you deny it? Let's get her!"

Before Janice could utter another word, Patton's hand sliced through the air in a decisive gesture. Like a well-oiled machine, the Lambert family's security force sprang into action, forming an impenetrable ring around her.

Janice's eyes swept across the circle of trained fighters surrounding her, her expression hardening into granite.

"Mr. Lambert, might I have a moment to present my case?"

Chapter 760:

A cruel smile twisted Patton's features. "Save your explanations for my brother when you meet him in the afterlife!"

On his signal, the guards launched their assault like a coordinated pack of wolves, their attacks precise and merciless.

Out of lingering respect for Jorge's memory, Janice chose restraint, limiting herself to defensive maneuvers rather than striking back at his family members.

Yet even with her extraordinary combat prowess, the sheer number of attackers meant her stamina would eventually fail her.

Storm clouds gathered in Janice's expression as the relentless assault pushed her to her limits. Anger flickered in her eyes like lightning.

While she understood their grief-fueled rage and thirst for vengeance, she wondered bitterly if not one of them had stopped to consider there might be more to Jorge's murder than met the eye.

"Everyone, stop."

The command cut through the chaos like a frozen blade.

Janice froze mid-movement, turning to the familiar voice. Her eyes widened in genuine shock.

"Aiden?"

Vernon wheeled Aiden through the tense gathering, the latter's complexion still ashen from his hospital stay, yet his eyes blazed with an unwavering intensity.

Janice shot Vernon a withering glare that spoke volumes about bringing Aiden here in his condition.

Vernon could only respond with a helpless smile. He had tried to refuse, but Aiden's determination had been absolute. The man would have crawled here if necessary.

"You should be resting in the hospital," Janice chided, her voice a mixture of concern and reproach.

Aiden's lips curved into a weary smile. "I'm grateful I came. Otherwise, these misguided fools might have harmed you."

"Vernon!"

At Aiden's command, Vernon guided the wheelchair forward, positioning him before the assembled Lambert family.

Even confined to the chair, Aiden's natural authority commanded attention, causing the Lamberts to shift uneasily.

"Who are you? And what is your connection to MO?" Patton studied Aiden with calculated interest, sensing the power that radiated from him despite his weakened state.

"Aiden Green, head of the Green family in Efrery and sole CEO of Forest Corp."

Aiden Green?

The name struck Patton like a physical force. This was the business prodigy who had spent three years feigning disability, meticulously rooting out traitors in his midst before capturing them all in one masterful stroke.

During that same period, he had secretly built Forest Corp into an empire that left his peers in awe.

Though Efrery-based, Aiden's reputation had spread to Cloverhill like wildfire, with families clamoring for connections.

Patton, being of similar age, had long admired the Green family head from afar, harboring a desire to match wits with him. Yet fate had chosen this fraught moment for their first encounter.