

## Wrath 761

Chapter 761:

“MO is my friend. Mr. Lambert, surely you’re astute enough to realize—if MO were truly guilty, why would she risk coming here?” Aiden stated, his voice carrying a quiet authority that seemed to settle over the agitated crowd like a blanket of calm.

“Mr. Lambert, I’m here to tell you the truth.” As the Lambert family’s hostile energy began to settle, Janice seized her chance to speak. “Jorge is my friend. I have no reason to kill him.”

“No reason to kill him?” Hank stepped forward, his face twisted with contempt. “From what I understand, you had prior conflicts with my son. You must have killed him out of revenge!”

“Is that what Gilmore told you?” Janice’s voice dripped with disdain at Hank’s flimsy logic. “Are you aware of what transpired at White Goose Mountain?”

“White Goose Mountain?” Hank’s reaction confirmed Janice’s suspicion—he had paid little attention to Jorge’s affairs.

“Then surely you know about Samantha?”

The name sent ripples through the Lambert family, their expressions changing subtly.

Hank opened his mouth to speak, but Patton raised a hand to silence him. “I believe you, MO. However, if you cannot prove your innocence, we will spare no expense to bring you to justice.”

“Mr. Lambert, do you truly desire to avenge Jorge?”

The question made Patton’s eyes flicker, but instead of answering, he stepped aside, gesturing for Janice to enter the house.

Janice felt a sneer forming inside.

The Lamberts were truly absurd.

Hank had always neglected his second son, never showing an ounce of concern. Yet here he stood, shouting accusations merely to maintain the family's morale.

He understood the politics at play—showing weakness after his son's death would only demoralize the other Lamberts.

Patton, shrewd and calculating, was wielding Jorge's death as a rallying cry to cement his own position within the family hierarchy.

Jorge, how poor! Even in death, he remained nothing more than a pawn in his family's power games.

"Vernon," Janice called out.

Vernon stepped outside to stand guard, gathering additional support. If the Lamberts chose willful ignorance, Janice wouldn't waste her breath on explanations.

She guided Aiden's wheelchair into the house, where Jorge's lifeless form lay on the floor—a sight that struck her harder than expected.

Memories flooded back unbidden: their recent confrontation, his comically bruised face after their fight, and how she'd helped him triumph over Conley at White Goose Mountain, dissolving their animosity.

That turning point had revealed a different side of Jorge to her. Beneath his notorious reputation lay a man of surprising depth and genuine feeling.

In another lifetime, perhaps, they could have forged a real friendship. But fate had written a crueler ending.

Aiden caught the shadow of sorrow flickering across Janice's face and asked with genuine concern, "Are you alright?"

Snapping out of her thoughts, Janice curved her lips into a faint smile. "I'm fine. But are you sure you can handle this?"

Chapter 762:

Eager to prove his strength, Aiden tried to move, but the moment he did, a wave of weakness crashed over him, forcing him to stop.

Still, he forced a grin, determined to appear unshaken. "I'm your man. Now that you're in trouble, I have to push through, no matter how bad it gets."

Janice let out a small sigh and tapped his forehead, a trace of amusement in her eyes. "Since when did you become my man?"

"It's only a matter of time," Aiden replied, his confidence unwavering. His self-assured grin made Janice shake her head with a chuckle.

"MO, go on. Tell us the truth." Patton's words pulled Janice's attention back to the room.

She turned to him and spoke calmly. "Jorge and I had our share of bad blood, but we settled our differences during the race at White Goose Mountain."

"Ha. You expect me to believe that?" Hank sneered. "My son wasn't the type to forgive and forget. You think a race just wiped the slate clean?"

Janice met Hank's gaze with a look that bordered on pity. "Mr. Lambert, if you don't believe me, feel free to investigate. I have no interest in arguing over something so trivial. Either way, the real culprit behind Jorge's death is most likely Gilmore."

“Nonsense!” Hank barked, his expression twisting with suspicion. “The Lamberts and the Welches have always been on good terms. Gilmore is known for being gentle and low-key. Why would he have any reason to kill my son? MO, are you trying to drive a wedge between our families?”

A murmur rippled through the Lamberts, nodding in agreement with Hank’s words.

Janice exhaled slowly, rubbing her temples. How did this man ever become the head of a family?

Rather than waste more breath on the argument, she pulled out her phone and brought up a message. “This is what Jorge sent me right before he died.”

Patton stepped forward, eyes narrowing as he read the message. “Stomach?”

“Stomach? My son was dying, and you expect me to believe he sent such a bizarre message?” Hank snapped, his face contorted with doubt. “This smells like a setup!”

“Starting to think you fabricated this whole thing just to stir up trouble between our families!”

“Humph.” Aiden let out a cold, sharp laugh. He was already feeling weak and had no desire to argue, but Hank’s words ignited a fire in his chest.

“The Lambert family is supposed to be a mighty clan, yet you speak like a fool.” His voice rang through the room, mirroring Janice’s unspoken thoughts.

Then, turning to Patton, he added, “Your father may be blind to the obvious, but surely you can see something isn’t right here.”

A harsh cough suddenly racked his body.

“Aiden, stop talking. Let me handle this,” Janice murmured, gently patting Aiden’s back.

But Aiden shook his head and steadied his breath. “I’m fine. But if the Lamberts can’t recognize the clear oddity here, there’s no point in reasoning with them. They’re beyond help. Jorge was probably the smartest of the bunch.”

“What did you just say?”

The Lamberts erupted in anger, their glares burning into both Aiden and Janice.

Janice scanned the furious faces surrounding her, a pang of sorrow settling in her chest. Poor Jorge. Not only was his family selfish, but they were also painfully ignorant.

Chapter 763:

Their resentment was so deep that they seemed to take being compared to Jorge as an outright insult.

“Enough!” Patton’s sharp voice sliced through the tension, silencing the room.

Fixing his father with a steady gaze, he said in a grave tone, “Father, let me handle this. I know what needs to be done.”

Hank’s expression flickered with resistance, but after a beat, he let out a disgruntled snort and stepped back.

Now addressing Janice and Aiden, Patton’s voice was measured but firm. “You’re right—something doesn’t add up. But speculation isn’t enough. We need proof. How can you back up your claims?”

Janice’s eyes drifted toward Jorge’s lifeless body sprawled on the floor. “An autopsy.”

Patton’s demeanor changed. His gaze darkened as he studied Janice. “You’re saying the answer lies in my brother’s stomach?”

“It’s highly possible. His final message contained only one word—‘stomach.’ That has to be the most crucial clue.” Janice’s tone carried no hesitation. “If we perform an autopsy, the truth will come to light.”

A ripple of shock spread through the Lamberts. The murmurs returned, now laced with outrage.

“Jorge has already suffered a tragic death, and now they want to desecrate his body? This is a sin!”

“I won’t stand for it! A Lambert descendant must remain whole, even in death!”

Listening to the backlash among the Lamberts, Aiden felt irritated once more.

Janice placed her hand on his shoulder to calm him.

She said decisively, “Either we perform an autopsy on Jorge’s body to uncover the truth, or you refuse, and we prepare for a relentless battle.”

Patton’s eyes widened, clearly shocked by Janice’s words.

Suddenly, a bodyguard hurried over and whispered something in Patton’s ear, causing his expression to change immediately.

The house was now encircled by men in black, who seemed like skilled fighters.

Patton turned to MO, whose presence was overpowering. Despite his years in business, he had never met anyone with such a commanding aura. Only the most elite could exhibit such an aura.

“Patton, you cannot allow the autopsy! You must keep your brother’s body whole!”

“If it comes down to a final standoff, so be it! We do not fear a mere doctor!”

The clamor from the Lamberts deepened Patton’s frown as he pondered his next move.

“Proceed with the autopsy,” Patton declared through clenched teeth, effectively silencing his family. The Lamberts stared in shock, unable to believe Patton would consent to MO’s request for an autopsy.

“MO, to be clear, you may go ahead with the autopsy, but should it turn up nothing, you will face our wrath.”

“Fine!”

Janice exchanged a look with Aiden and approached Jorge’s body. Patton nodded to Hank, who promptly cleared the room, leaving only the four of them and the corpse.

Janice drew a dagger, knelt, and pulled back the white cloth to reveal Jorge’s pallid face.

Chapter 764:

A sudden vision of Jorge desperately banging his head on the ground, begging Gilmore for mercy, flashed through her mind. In that moment, he had covertly swallowed the evidence.

Janice shook her head to dispel the haunting image. “Forgive me, Jorge.” With a swift motion, her hand moved.

The dagger cut through Jorge’s abdomen cleanly.

Patton and Hank instinctively turned away, unable to bear the gruesome sight.

This was their brother and son, and even in death, his body was being dissected.

For Janice, however, who had performed countless surgeries, the bloody scene was just another day at work. She quickly retrieved a black object from the abdomen.

“Is that a bug?” Patton recognized the object and gasped in shock. Hank staggered back, his face a mixture of disbelief and fear. “Gilmore really killed him? But why?”

"If you want to understand why, listen to what the bug recorded," Janice said as she tossed the bug to Patton. "I assume you have the means to play it."

Patton caught the bug and silently went to fetch the playback equipment.

Their expressions turned grave as they listened to the recording.

"The White family? It involved the White family? Is this karma catching up with the Lamberts?" Hank said bitterly.

Behind her mask, Janice's eyes gleamed with a sharp, cold light. It was her fault Jorge had died.

If Jorge hadn't tried to uncover the truth about the White family for her, he might not have met such a tragic fate.

"Are you okay?" Aiden took her hand, his eyes full of concern.

"I'm fine." Janice steadied herself and addressed Hank. "Mr. Lambert, as you've heard, Jorge died because he learned a secret he shouldn't have. Gilmore killed him to keep it quiet. I need to know where you stand now."

Hank's face hardened. "What do you propose?"

"Jorge's death is partially my fault. I cannot let it be in vain."

Hank was visibly shaken. He considered her words before blurting out, "What ties do you have to the White family? Are you the survivor Gilmore mentioned?"

"Yes and no," Janice replied, leaving Hank more confused and wary.

“Father, the Lambert family was involved in the massacre of the White family years ago. Now, we face two paths,” Patton interjected, looking at Hank.

“What are they?” Hank looked perplexed, focusing on Patton.

Patton exhaled slowly, his frustration evident. “MO wants us to choose. We can either remain under the Welches’ thumb, or we can ally with MO and oppose them.”

Hank’s pupils constricted in horror. “Oppose the Welch family? That’s absolute madness! The Welch family’s roots run deep in Cloverhill, their influence casting a long shadow over the city. How could we possibly stand against such power?”

Patton’s eyes flickered with grim determination. “Let me be crystal clear about this. Tonight, we face two paths: either share the White family’s tragic fate from years past, or align ourselves with MO. There is no middle ground.”

His words struck Hank like a physical blow, sending tremors through his mind.

Casting anxious glances at Janice and Aiden, doubt gnawed at Hank’s thoughts. Could these two individuals truly orchestrate the downfall of the Lambert family?

Chapter 765:

“MO, while your true capabilities remain a mystery to me, my instincts whisper that there’s far more to you than meets the eye,” Patton declared, his eyes narrowing as his voice took on a grave tone. “I’ve never been one to gamble with fate, but this time, I’m betting everything on my gut feeling.”

The looming presence of the black-clad figures outside weighed heavily on his decision.

Janice arched an eyebrow, knowing Patton had read her correctly. The revelation of the Lambert family’s hand in the White family’s destruction had planted the seeds of vengeance in her heart. Yet, Jorge’s sacrifice had earned the Lamberts one chance at survival.

“You have Jorge to thank for this mercy,” she said.

“Indeed! The world saw my brother as nothing but a failure. But who could have imagined that he would become the Lambert family’s saving grace in our darkest hour?”

The weight of these words sank deep into Hank’s consciousness as their true meaning crystallized. A bitter smile twisted his lips as he shook his head. “Perhaps this is karma finally catching up to us. But I swear on everything I hold dear—the Lambert family never spilled a drop of White family blood. We merely followed the Welches’ directive to sabotage their business ventures. The White family’s complete destruction? That blood stains the hands of the three Welch brothers, with Gilmore being the most ruthless of them all.”

Janice’s penetrating gaze bore into Hank’s eyes, searching for any trace of deception. Yet the man who had been trembling with fear moments ago now spoke with unwavering conviction. His truth rang clear.

Aiden caught the subtle shift in Janice’s expression—a flicker of relief crossing her features. Had the Lamberts been directly involved in the White family’s murders, not even Jorge’s sacrifice would have saved them from Janice’s vengeance. Now, it seemed, Jorge’s memory might spare the Lambert family after all.

“Tell me everything about that year,” Janice commanded, her voice leaving no room for evasion.

After a moment’s hesitation, Hank steeled himself to reveal the buried past.

“The White family’s destruction came like a bolt from the blue, sending shockwaves through all of Cloverhill. But the Welch family, with their vast web of influence, quickly smothered any whispers of the truth. Only the most powerful families know what really happened back then. That should give you a measure of the Welch family’s iron grip on Cloverhill.”

His eyes searched Janice’s face intently, hunting for even a flicker of fear. If she showed any sign of wavering, he would bury today’s revelations deep, letting them fade into whispered secrets. After all, challenging the Welch family was like dancing with death itself.

But Janice’s gaze remained steady as steel, touched with an arctic coolness that left Hank bewildered. Could this renowned surgeon truly possess the means to stand against the mighty Welches?

"Harlan is dead," Janice declared.

"What?" Hank was stunned. "Harlan is dead? How is that possible?"

"I killed him," Janice stated with the casual air of someone discussing morning coffee, though her words sent earthquakes through Hank's and Patton's hearts.

"My patience grows thin. No more games." Her voice cut like a scalpel.

Hank and Patton exchanged weighted glances before Hank set his jaw. "For my son's life and the Lambert family's survival, I'll roll these dice. MO, don't let me down."

Chapter 766:

"You have no choice."

After a pause, Hank's lips curved into a smile as bitter as wormwood. Then he began to unravel the tapestry of that year.

"Twenty years ago, Orson held the reins of power, and the Welch family stood at its zenith, their influence even eclipsing the mighty Payne family. Under Orson's masterful guidance, his three sons grew into formidable forces, each one a worthy contender for..."

The family's crown. Just as speculation swirled around which of Orson's sons would inherit his mantle, a single revelation shattered the Welch family's carefully constructed peace.

Janice's mind raced ahead—she had already pieced together that this news must have involved the woman who became the catalyst for the White family's destruction.

"The brothers uncovered Orson's affair with a woman from the White family. But what truly ignited their fury was his intention to transfer a portion of the Welch family's vast fortune to her."

Hank released a weary sigh, his smile etched with regret. "Though the Welch family projected strength and stability to the world, their internal power struggles burned hotter than any other clan's. The three brothers convinced themselves that this woman had ensnared their father with her charms. So they took matters into their own bloodstained hands, moving against the White family while keeping Orson in the dark. Their twisted logic was simple—eliminate the White family, and their father's 'temptation' would vanish with them. The White family had carved out their own respectable place in Cloverhill by then. Even with the Welch family's considerable influence, orchestrating their overnight destruction was no simple task. So the brothers forged alliances with other powerful families, all bent on one goal—to uproot the White family from Cloverhill completely."

Hank cast a nervous glance toward Janice, who appeared unsettlingly composed. He sensed an unsettling tension hiding beneath her calm demeanor, like the heavy silence in the air before a storm broke loose.

"We were ordered to deal with the White family's construction business," Hank continued. "We severed their ties with key allies, effectively isolating them and blocking any attempts to find external support."

All the while, Aiden's eyes had been fixed on Janice. Despite her composed exterior, a cold, intimidating energy radiated from her. Internally, she was probably boiling with anger and bitterness, just biding her time to retaliate.

"Go on," Janice instructed, her voice devoid of emotion.

After a while, Hank resumed his story. "News of the White family's ruin reached Orson the following day. Overwhelmed with rage, he suffered a heart attack and never recovered. With Orson incapacitated, he was forced to hand over the leadership of the Welch family to his oldest son, Mateo. Despite bearing the title, Mateo lacked any real power. That's how it all went down back then. But when it comes to the finer details, only the three Welch brothers and Orson might have the answers."

Hank let out a heavy sigh. "We were ordered to keep silent about the matter. These days, only a handful of people know the real truth." Hank's gaze shifted back to Janice, filled with apprehension.

Patton hesitated for a moment and then spoke. "MO, on behalf of the Lambert family, I want to apologize for what we did to the White family back then. From this day forward, I give you my word—the Lambert family will stand by your side."

Hank was taken aback by his son's bold vow and fell silent, turning over its implications in his mind. The years had worn him down. Gone were the days of his youthful ambition. It was now Patton's turn to shape the future of the Lambert family.

Chapter 767:

Janice was silent for a prolonged period before finally speaking. "I want no fifth person to learn of our discussion today."

"Understood."

Janice looked at Hank and Patton. "From now on, you should still claim that I am responsible for Jorge's death. When the time is right, I will let you play your part."

"Alright."

Hank and Patton grasped the necessity of Janice's strategy, acknowledging it as their optimal course of action at the moment.

After issuing their orders, Janice and Aiden promptly departed. As the pair left, Hank and Patton exhaled deeply, their shirts damp with perspiration from the tension.

"MO and Aiden are both extraordinary in their own way," Hank remarked. "Maybe they have what it takes to stand against the Welch family."

Patton asked, "Could MO be related to the White family?"

"It's a strong possibility. Yet, her cryptic 'yes and no' baffles me." Shaking his head, Patton said, "Even if she's not directly descended from the White family, her intense reaction suggests a significant link. Why else would she react so vehemently to your story?"

"Best to let it go. We've made our decision; now we must focus on the future. Despite our efforts over the years, we have always been mere chess pieces in greater schemes."

Initially manipulated by the Welch family, they now found themselves under MO's influence.

"What matters most is survival. Being a pawn isn't the worst fate," Patton said.

Caught off guard, Hank then laughed heartily. "Patton, handing over the reins of the Lambert family to you truly seems like the wisest decision."

Yet Patton's smile was tinged with sadness as he gazed upon Jorge's lifeless form. Perhaps his brother would have been a better leader. "We should honor Jorge with a grand funeral. He was invaluable to the Lambert family," Patton declared.

Janice led Aiden out of the Lambert family's house, guiding him toward the exit. As they emerged, Vernon and his men encircled them, his expression etched with worry.

"What happened inside? Were you threatened? I'm ready to act against them this instant."

"Call off your men," Janice instructed. "And Prescott should make sure our visit tonight leaves no trace."

For a brief moment, Vernon was caught off guard, but he quickly regained his composure and followed along without hesitation. The men in black were sent off, each returning to their designated posts. Vernon got behind the wheel and drove Aiden back to the hospital.

Throughout the visit, Aiden had suppressed the discomfort tormenting his body, but now his complexion turned ghostly white, which brought on a stern lecture from Janice.

Surprisingly, Aiden appeared to take pleasure in being scolded.

"Janice, do you trust the truth of Hank's statements?" Taking advantage of the brief break in Janice's scolding, Aiden quickly led the conversation in a different direction.

A shadow passed over Janice's features as she nodded slowly. "Hank has little reason to deceive us. However, there's likely more he doesn't know."

Chapter 768:

Aiden arched an eyebrow, puzzled as he regarded Janice.

"I have a few ideas, but I'll have to wait until Orson wakes up to be sure." A thoughtful intensity flickered in Janice's eyes. If her suspicions turned out to be true, the truth about what had happened that year would be unbelievably shocking.

A deafening bang shattered the quiet as the room door burst open, slamming against the wall with force. Mateo stormed in, crackling with fury.

Gilmore glanced up at him, a slight smile playing on his lips. "Mateo, you've been awfully dramatic lately. At this rate, I fear that poor door won't survive many more of your tantrums."

"What the hell have you done?" Mateo ignored the jab, his palm striking the table with a resounding thud as his glare bore into Gilmore.

"Father still hasn't woken up, and we've yet to provide MO with a proper explanation for Harlan's actions—yet here you are, provoking her?"

Unfazed, Gilmore asked casually, "Did you know Jorge had eavesdropped on our last conversation?"

Mateo stiffened, his anger momentarily cooling into something sharper as his eyes narrowed in suspicion. "You're saying he overheard everything?"

Gilmore gave a slow, deliberate nod. "And you understand the significance of what we discussed. If that information gets out, it won't just cause trouble—it'll upend everything."

But something didn't sit right with Mateo. Jorge? Eavesdropping? That didn't sound like him.

“Are you sure you’re not mistaken?”

Gilmore’s expression darkened with something close to disdain, his silence alone speaking volumes. The 100k was enough to reignite Mateo’s temper.

“What’s with that look? I can’t question you now?”

“You and I both know what kind of man Jorge is. And yet, he came back to me, claiming he would betray you and side with me. That kind of fickleness doesn’t come without an agenda.” Gilmore poured another cup of coffee, nudging it towards Mateo.

Mateo eyed the coffee but made no move to take it. His mind was spinning. Jorge had been acting strange earlier.

He had excused himself, claiming a stomach ache. But it turned out he had gone to Gilmore.

“He was so convincing that anyone else would’ve fallen for it. But I paid attention. He touched the vase by the door.”

Mateo’s head snapped towards the vase standing in the corner. “What’s the matter with the vase?”

“I suspect it had a bug attached to it. The problem is, I’ve torn this place apart and found nothing,” Gilmore muttered, drumming his fingers against his cup, his irritation growing as the situation continued to slip beyond his control.

Mateo’s head snapped up. “And you killed him without proof?”

Gilmore scoffed. “What was I supposed to do? Let him walk out of here and spread our secret? The bug—if it exists—could still be in this room.” He had a nagging suspicion that Jorge’s act with the vase had been nothing more than a clever misdirection, a ploy to draw attention away from the real location of the bug.

But what unsettled him wasn't just the possibility of the bug—it was the message Jorge might have sent before taking his last breath. That, more than anything, gnawed at him.

Chapter 769:

Mateo gulped down the coffee in one swift motion, but the warmth did nothing to settle his nerves. "Now that Jorge is dead and you've sent Harlan away, how the hell are we supposed to explain this to MO?"

"Mateo, keep your head on straight," Gilmore said smoothly. "I've already taken care of it. Jorge's body has been returned to the Lambert family, along with a little message—MO was the one who killed him. The Lamberts won't let that slide. They'll be out for blood. And as for MO, even if she suspects something, she has no proof. She can't touch us. Once Father wakes up, she will be worthless to us."

Mateo's breath hitched, his eyes widening. In that moment, the full weight of Gilmore's ruthlessness settled over him. No wonder Orson had kept him neutral—Gilmore wasn't just cunning; he was utterly ruthless. He wouldn't hesitate to eliminate anyone who stood in his way. Even Mateo himself.

"Call Hank. Offer your condolences, and while you're at it, see what he knows."

"Alright!"

Mateo pulled out his phone and dialed Hank's number. The line rang a few times before a tired, gravelly voice came through.

"Mateo, what can I do for you?"

Mateo exchanged a brief glance with Gilmore before clearing his throat. "Hank, my deepest condolences. I heard about Jorge. If there's anything I can do, don't hesitate to ask."

A low, humorless chuckle drifted through the receiver, sending a ripple of unease down Mateo's spine. "I appreciate your concern. I only have one request. If we move against MO, stay out of it. Otherwise, things might get complicated."

"I understand. I just can't believe MO would go so far as to kill Jorge. Disagreements are one thing, but murder? That's crossing a line."

"Indeed, and thank you for your condolences. But right now, I have a funeral to arrange. Let's leave it at that."

"Of course."

The call ended, and Mateo set the phone down, a dangerous glint flickering in his eyes.

"Looks like he bought it. Hank believes MO killed Jorge."

Gilmore leaned back, the corner of his lips twitching into a satisfied smirk. "In two days, Father will wake up. By then, MO and the Lamberts will be at each other's throats, and neither will have time to worry about us. With any luck, they'll destroy each other, and we'll be the ones left standing to collect the spoils."

Mateo studied Gilmore with narrowed eyes, an inexplicable chill seizing his heart as he sensed the waves of malevolence radiating from the man before him.

Unlike his usual composed demeanor—detached and deliberately unremarkable—when Gilmore unleashed his ruthless side, even Mateo found himself gripped by fear.

The memory of the White family's downfall years ago remained seared in Mateo's mind. Gilmore had single-handedly orchestrated their destruction, leaving over a hundred members slaughtered. When Mateo arrived at the scene, he found Gilmore standing amid the carnage, as calm as death itself.

"How's Harlan doing? Surely he must have reached his destination by now?" Mateo asked.

"Yes." Gilmore gave a measured nod. "Everything proceeds according to plan. Now we simply await Father's awakening."

“There’s another matter to discuss.” Mateo’s voice took on a grave tone. “If Father wakes and chooses to pass his power to me, what then will you do?”

Chapter 770:

“As long as it serves the Welch family’s interests, you’ll have my full support.”

Mateo’s frown deepened, unsatisfied.

The implication was clear—should he ever act against the family’s interests, Gilmore wouldn’t hesitate to turn on him.

“Mateo, your focus should be elsewhere right now—on that bastard,” Gilmore interjected suddenly. “My sources confirm he’s in Efrery. However, someone’s shielding him from the shadows. Most of my operatives have been eliminated.”

“No worries. Once Father wakes, I’ll dispatch my two sons to retrieve him.” A cold smile played across Mateo’s lips. “It’s the perfect chance for them to prove their worth, making their eventual succession of my position all the smoother.”

Gilmore suppressed a sneer. Here was Mateo, his own position not yet secured, already plotting succession.

Such impatience didn’t bode well for the Welch family’s future. In the three days leading to Orson’s awakening, the world held its breath.

The highway chase—a symphony of gunfire and death—should have rocked the city to its core. Yet mysteriously, major media outlets maintained their silence, refusing to report the incident.

The reason was understood by all—none dared provoke the Welch family’s wrath.

Meanwhile, everyone’s attention was diverted to the Lambert family.

Jorge had died unexpectedly, rumored to be from a car racing accident. None dared dig deeper into the truth, though whispers circulated about the involvement of MO.

Adding to the intrigue, the Mendoza family made an unprecedented move, announcing their complete relocation to Efrery and gifting their remaining assets to the Payne family. The decision sent shockwaves through elite circles.

“The Mendoza patriarch shows decisiveness,” Janice mused, lounging against the car window with practiced indifference. “Though fleeing to Efrery—who can say if it’s misfortune or foolishness?”

“Perhaps we should send Leah to pay them a visit?” Vernon’s lips curved into a wicked smile. “How ironic—in trying to escape you, they’ve wandered straight into your domain.”

He cast a meaningful glance at Aiden. “Or rather, the domain of you both.”

Despite only two days of rest, Aiden showed remarkable recovery. Janice had insisted he remain under hospital observation, but his stubborn nature prevailed, demanding discharge against medical advice.

Unable to sway his determination, Janice had reluctantly conceded.

“Let’s wait and see,” Janice replied with measured calm. “The Mendoza family’s flight to Efrery amounts to nothing less than self-sacrifice—a desperate move that brings them no advantage. Consider how they’ve surrendered vast assets to the Payne family, merely to secure protection.”

The implications hung heavy in the air. Should Janice move to crush the Mendoza family, the Payne family would surely intervene. Managing the Welch family alone proved challenging enough; adding the Payne family to the equation would stretch even Janice’s considerable resources too thin.

“Bain’s decision reveals his cunning, yet something doesn’t add up. Why would he follow Harlan’s lead? With the Payne family’s backing, they shouldn’t need to bow to the Welch family,” Aiden said curiously.

“Because he has a foolish daughter.”

Janice had initially expected Harlan to pin everything on Conley. But after Prescott's investigation, it turned out the person hiring the mercenaries was Conley's sister, Esther.