

Wrath 811

Chapter 811:

“Honey, this isn’t Janice’s first time here. Why are you treating it like we’re hosting royalty?” Alcott let out a long-suffering sigh as he watched everything unfold.

Nina shot him a sharp glare, her voice laced with warning. “She’s going to be part of the Green family one day. Isn’t that reason enough? Besides, you’ve made your fair share of blunders in the past. If you so much as show Janice an ounce of attitude later, don’t blame me for giving you a piece of my mind.”

Alcott instinctively raised a hand to his cheek, already feeling the phantom sting of a slap that hadn’t even landed.

“Alright, alright, I get it. I’ve learned my lesson—I won’t screw up again. I just never expected that scoundrel Bart to drag me down with him.”

“What? You think everything was his fault and you were not to blame?”

“No, no, no! Of course not!” Alcott waved his hands frantically. “I swear, from now on, my focus is solely on you and our son. No more trouble, no more mistakes.”

Nina crossed her arms, unimpressed. “I’ll believe half of that for now. The rest depends on how well you behave.”

“Aiden and Janice have arrived!”

The butler’s loud voice interrupted the conversation between Nina and Alcott.

Eager, Nina hurriedly made her way outside. From afar, she spotted Janice and Aiden approaching.

“Janice, I’ve really missed you!” Nina sprinted over and hugged Janice so tightly, they looked like mother and daughter.

"I'm sorry if I worried you," Janice said with an apologetic smile, handing over a small gift box. "Here's a small gift for you, as a way to make up for my absence."

"Having you back is the best gift I could ask for. You shouldn't have gone to the trouble."

"Trouble? It's no trouble at all. It would make me very happy to know you liked it."

Janice's kind words caused Nina to light up with happiness. She quickly guided Janice into the house.

Alcott and Aiden shared an uncomfortable look, feeling a bit left out, and quietly followed them inside.

"Ma'am, lunch is prepared and can be served at any moment," the maid notified Nina.

"Janice, you must be starving. Come on. Let's eat now," Nina said as she led Janice to the dining table. "I've prepared something special for today, including some ingredients that were flown in just this morning."

"There's no need for all this lavishness. We're family; something simpler would have been enough."

A smile spread across Nina's face. "Now that you mention family, when do you and Aiden plan on getting remarried?"

Aiden entered the room just in time to catch this question, his face suddenly taking on an awkward expression. "Mom, there's no need to rush."

"No rush? How can I not worry? Until you two are officially remarried, I won't be able to rest easy. With everything going on these days, what if someone else wins Janice's heart?" Nina spoke with such sincerity that there was no room for disagreement in her words.

Aiden shot a look at Janice, silently questioning whether she might be swayed by another.

Janice shrugged and flashed a teasing smile, leaving Aiden uncertain and on edge. Her playful uncertainty nearly drove him mad.

Chapter 812:

Just earlier in the car, they had been so close, so intimate.

But now, why did Janice suddenly seem so distant?

Janice's unpredictable nature reminded Aiden of a phrase from a romance novel he once read: "Divorce might feel liberating, but winning her back is pure torment."

"Janice, please make yourself at home," Nina said warmly, then pulled Aiden aside. In a hushed tone, she asked, "Tell me the truth—what's really happening with you and Janice right now?"

"We're moving in the right direction. It shouldn't be long before we're getting back together."

"Really?" Nina appeared doubtful.

Aiden exhaled a helpless sigh. "Mom, trust me. I've been really putting in the effort to win Janice back."

"Is that why your room is overflowing with those romance novels? Have you been studying them to refine your approach to wooing her?" Nina's observation made Aiden's cheeks turn red with embarrassment. He never expected his mother would go through his room and find those novels. How could he face anyone now?

"Aiden, what's with that look? I'm your mother. Do you honestly think I would make fun of you? Alright, enough of that. Let's eat."

Leaving Aiden confused, Nina turned her focus back to showering Janice with attention.

“Where’s Sierra?” Janice asked curiously. “Aiden mentioned you invited Sierra to join us for the meal today.”

Nina’s face clouded over, and she shook her head. “Sierra has been rather distant lately. She often doesn’t respond to my messages. Even when I hinted that you’d be here today, she didn’t show much interest.” Janice’s brow creased in confusion. Sierra would normally have hurried over as soon as she heard of the news. Nina’s mention of Sierra’s lack of response raised her suspicions.

“Has there been any activity with the Ramirez family recently?”

“Not much has been going on with the Ramirez family lately. Wait... A notable family from Cloverhill has recently relocated to Efrery, and the Ramirez family seems to have grown quite close to them. Could there be a connection?”

A family from Cloverhill?

Janice’s eyes narrowed, piecing things together—the Mendoza family.

The Mendoza family had fled to Efrery to escape their troubles. As newcomers, they would need the support of the local powers to establish themselves.

Among the prominent families in Efrery, the four leading ones would be their most natural allies.

The Green family wasn’t a viable choice—their influence was so vast that they would more likely overpower the Mendoza family than work alongside them.

The Delgado family might have been a better candidate, but with Kenneth still mastering his role and his unstable foundation, too close an alliance with the Mendoza family might expose them to risks. This made the Ramirez family the most likely candidates for an alliance.

Leonie had once conspired with Bart, but everything changed when Aiden took control. She faced harsh punishment, and as a result, the entire Ramirez family found themselves in a precarious position. They

were now hanging by a thread, dangerously close to being cast out from the ranks of the four elite families.

As if their troubles weren't enough, Nellie's tragic ordeal had cast an even darker shadow over the Ramirez family's reputation.

Chapter 813:

At this critical point, an alliance with the influential Mendoza family, who were making waves in the area, could possibly restore their standing.

"After lunch, why don't we go see the Ramirez family together?" Nina suggested. "I'm a bit worried about Sierra."

"Of course, I'll join you," Janice responded, her smile warm. "I've really missed Sierra during my trip."

The meal was lavish, with each dish being a perfect blend of color, aroma, and flavor. For Janice, the food was decent, but the true delight lay in the company she kept. Dining with loved ones turned even the simplest fare into a feast.

"Ma'am, you have a visitor," the butler announced, interrupting their meal.

Janice looked up, puzzled. "Who could it be?"

"It's Wendy Chadwick."

Janice's expression darkened as her eyes met Aiden's in silent understanding. They both recognized the surprise mirrored in each other's eyes.

Wendy had openly challenged Janice just the evening before, and now she appeared uninvited. What could her intentions be? Was she here to stir trouble? Doubts lingered about Wendy's ability to execute any serious plans.

“Wendy sure picks her moments,” Nina frowned. “Janice, don’t worry. Whatever she’s plotting, I’m here for you.”

Janice managed a forced smile. Nina seemed to think Wendy’s visit was related to her collaboration with Stephen.

“Hold off on jumping to conclusions. Let’s find out what she wants first.”

“Alright then!”

Wendy stepped in, dressed in a flowing white gown, her makeup subtle and refined. The usual sharp edge in her demeanor was nowhere to be seen.

Her usual poise carried a touch of elegance, yet her face betrayed a weariness and a sense of defeat that were hard to miss.

Caught off guard by Wendy’s softened appearance, Janice pondered the sudden change. Wendy had smoothed out her harsher qualities and seemed less imposing. What could be the reason behind this change?

“Wendy, to what do I owe this unexpected visit?” Janice asked with a hint of caution.

Meeting Janice’s eyes, Wendy’s expression was a complex tapestry of emotions, her lips a tight line. Beneath the surface, signs of envy and bitterness lingered, yet she managed to suppress these, offering a smile instead.

The sight of that smile took Janice by surprise. “This act is quite disturbing. To come here during the day with such an unsettling smile, what are you attempting?”

Janice’s remark was light-hearted, yet Wendy continued to smile, seemingly drained of her usual defiance.

“Wendy, what’s gotten into you today?” Nina approached, eyeing Wendy critically. “You’ve never liked that color, yet here you are in it, and with that strange smile, no less. What’s going on with you?” Her question seemed to lower the temperature in the room, a coldness settling in despite the warm sunlight outside.

“I mean no harm this time,” Wendy said, her voice strained as she clenched her teeth. “I am here to apologize for my behavior yesterday.”

Both Janice and Aiden, fully aware of yesterday’s confrontation, were taken aback by Wendy’s statement. They vividly recalled Wendy’s spiteful demeanor just a day prior. Now, it seemed as if she had changed completely overnight, presenting herself as almost unrecognizable.

Chapter 814:

“Is this some kind of joke?” Janice’s expression grew stern as she scrutinized Wendy. “If you want a fight, then let’s fight. There’s no need for these theatrics or your empty apologies.”

“I am sincere in my apology, Janice. I’ll no longer interfere with Stephen’s collaboration with you, nor will I cause further trouble. I only ask for your forgiveness.”

Janice stood speechless. She couldn’t process what she was hearing, the stark contrast between Wendy’s current demeanor and her previous hostility leaving her utterly bewildered.

“Can you explain this change?” Janice demanded, maintaining a composed yet insistent tone. “This sudden shift in your attitude is unsettling to me.”

Wendy suddenly fell to her knees with a heavy thud.

Her dramatic gesture stunned Janice, Aiden, and even Nina, who couldn’t make sense of the spectacle.

“What in the world is happening?” Nina burst out, visibly upset. “You’re kneeling down like this before Janice? Have you no self-respect?”

Wendy remained silent, bowing her head even lower, her posture one of utter submissiveness.

“Please, Janice, accept my apology for all my previous wrongs. If not, I am prepared to stay here on my knees forever,” she pleaded.

Janice’s gaze hardened as she observed Wendy, her doubts intensifying. It seemed likely that a powerful figure had intervened the previous night, giving Wendy a warning.

This individual’s authority and sway over Wendy must have been profound, compelling her to forsake her own pride in seeking her forgiveness.

“Janice, I understand this isn’t easy for you to accept. But I swear, from this moment on, we will only be friends—never rivals. More than that, I can arrange for protection, both for you and Stephen, ensuring that no one dares lay a finger on either of you,” Wendy promised.

Janice cast Aiden a meaningful glance.

Without a moment’s hesitation, Aiden grasped her intent and led Nina inside.

“Aiden, what are you thinking? You’re leaving Janice alone with Wendy? That’s reckless!”

“Mom, relax. Even if Wendy had the audacity of a devil, she wouldn’t dare touch Janice now.”

“Ugh, what is Wendy playing at? She actually knelt before Janice, the ultimate act of submission, looking as pitiful as a stray dog. Is she cursed or something?”

Nina’s voice trailed off, still muttering complaints as she disappeared inside. Meanwhile, Janice invited Wendy in.

They made their way to the pavilion, where they sat facing each other. In the past, Wendy’s eyes would have burned with arrogance and malice. But now, fear had replaced that fire.

“Who sent you?” Janice asked bluntly, her voice like a blade slicing through the silence. “You didn’t come here out of your own goodwill. Someone put you up to this.”

Wendy’s gaze flickered uncertainly, her expression a tangled web of emotions. “You’re right. Someone sent me. But I can’t tell you who.”

Janice narrowed her eyes, studying Wendy’s every twitch and hesitation.

A moment later, she arrived at a conclusion. Wendy wasn’t lying. She was a pawn in someone else’s game, backed into a corner with no way out.

Chapter 815:

“Fascinating.” A slow, knowing smirk curled Janice’s lips. “Even after all this groveling, I cannot forgive you.”

“Why not?” Wendy’s eyes widened in panic, her pupils shrinking. “I’ve already thrown away my pride and knelt before you! Isn’t that enough?”

“It’s not nearly enough.” Janice’s words were measured, deliberate. “Stephen suffered because of you. Do you really think a half-hearted apology can erase that?”

“No, you must forgive me. Otherwise...”

Wendy no longer resembled the arrogant woman of the past. She looked like a desperate, cornered animal, trembling under an unseen threat.

“Otherwise what?” Janice asked coldly.

Wendy’s mouth opened, then shut. Fear flickered across her face at the mere thought of that person. She swallowed hard. “There are things I can’t say. But please, Janice, I’ll give you anything—any compensation you want.”

“Anything?” Janice let out a soft, mocking chuckle. “Then die. Maybe that would be enough to ease even a fraction of my hatred for you.”

A violent shudder ran through Wendy at the venom in Janice’s voice. “What is Stephen to you that you would go this far for him? Don’t tell me you’re in love with Stephen? Then what about Aiden?”

Wendy’s voice rose to a fevered pitch, her jealousy towards Janice intensifying with every word. Yet, under that person’s overwhelming pressure, she didn’t dare act against Janice or even reveal the slightest trace of resentment. Still, the jealousy and hatred simmering in her heart were impossible to suppress.

Janice found Wendy’s reaction amusing. She tilted her head slightly and smiled, her expression unreadable. “Why don’t you take a guess?”

“Janice Edwards!” Wendy shot to her feet, shaking with rage. But just as fury threatened to consume her, she bit it back, forcing herself to remain composed.

“This is only the beginning. From now on, my revenge starts. Whatever Stephen endured because of you, you will feel a thousandfold. So brace yourself.”

Wendy left the Green family’s house in disgrace, her footsteps heavy with shame. She stepped into her car and instructed the driver to take her back to her secluded villa.

As soon as the engine roared to life, she felt a bitter taste rise in her throat. Before she could stop it, she spat out a mouthful of blood. “Why? Why must I suffer such unbearable humiliation?” Wendy wiped the crimson stain from the corner of her mouth, seething with fury.

Suddenly, her phone rang, slicing through her spiral of rage. Instantly, the hostility drained from Wendy’s face, replaced by sheer terror.

“Master,” she answered, her voice barely above a whisper.

“Did you kneel and apologize to Janice?”

“Yes.”

“And did she forgive you?”

“No, she didn’t...”

Wendy clutched her phone so tightly that her knuckles turned white, her breath uneven. Was this it? Was she going to die?

The line went silent.

The longer the silence stretched, the more unbearable the weight pressing down on Wendy’s chest became.

“Master, who is Janice? Why do you protect her so fiercely?” Summoning what little courage she had left, Wendy voiced the question that had haunted her since the beginning.

Chapter 816:

“You’re asking too many questions.”

“I’m sorry.” Wendy bowed her head instinctively, as if he could see her submission through the phone. “I was wrong. Please, forgive me.”

“Wen, I know everything you’ve done over the years. If not for your unwavering loyalty—and the fact that you ensured the White family’s bloodline survived—the first thing I would have done upon waking up is take your life.”

A violent shudder wracked Wendy’s body. Even separated by distance, the sheer iciness of the man’s words felt like a blade against her throat. The memory of this man’s ruthless methods remained vivid in her mind, sending an uncontrollable tremor through her body.

“Enough! From this moment forward, no matter what Janice does to you, you must endure it without resistance. Even if she commands you to die, you obey without question. Do you understand?” the man demanded.

“I understand.”

Wendy hung up the phone, her fingers trembling as she shut her eyes, her face drained of color.

For the first time, she truly grasped Stephen’s torment. Perhaps, back then, he had felt the same suffocating despair, the same crushing helplessness that now wrapped around her like chains. She was still breathing, but inside, she was already dead.

Both of them were bound to someone they could never break free from, someone they owed unwavering loyalty.

Yet, there was a stark difference between them—Stephen had dared to rebel. Wendy, on the other hand, didn’t even have the courage to dream of defiance.

“Janice, has Wendy gone?” The moment Janice stepped back inside, Nina hurried over, concern written all over her face. “She didn’t cross the line, did she?”

Janice shook her head. Deep down, she almost wished Wendy had lashed out—it would have given her the perfect excuse to make Wendy’s life a living hell.

But Wendy hadn’t fought back. Despite the humiliation burning in her eyes, she had swallowed her pride, lowered her head, and even pleaded. That was what intrigued Janice the most. Who had the power to bend Wendy like this?

Janice could tell whoever it was clearly had no grudge against her—if anything, they seemed to be shielding her.

But she couldn’t think of a single person in her life who could make Wendy tremble like that.

She shrugged off the thought. If this mystery figure meant no harm, they would cross paths soon enough. No point wasting energy guessing now.

“Come on. We’re going to see Sierra.”

“Alright!”

Meanwhile, Sierra’s face burned with fury as she glared at Leonie and Chuck, her so-called parents.

Around them, the Ramirez family members lounged comfortably, watching the drama unfold with thinly veiled amusement, as if her misery were the evening’s entertainment.

“Sierra, this marriage alliance is a matter of life and death for our family. You will agree to it,” Leonie declared, her tone as cold as steel. “Or do you intend to disgrace us?”

“Disgrace you?” Sierra let out a dry, bitter laugh. “And what about what you’ve done to me? Isn’t that heartless beyond words?”

Chapter 817:

“For the sake of your precious power and influence, you’re willing to throw me away like a pawn, tying me to a man I neither love nor even know. Is that what parents are supposed to do?”

“We brought you into this world, so you owe us your obedience!” Chuck scoffed, his voice sharp as a whip. “One way or another, your marriage to Mr. Mendoza will be sealed today.”

“I won’t do it!” Sierra seized a pair of scissors and pressed them against her throat, her eyes blazing with defiance. “You claim you brought me into this world? Fine! Then I’ll return my life to you right now!”

Chuck and Leonie froze, their expressions laced with horror. They had expected resistance, maybe even a tantrum—but not this.

“Chuck, Sierra was never this reckless before! Could it be that she’s been influenced by Janice?”

“Tsk, tsk. Well, she does have Janice in her corner now. If anything happens to her, the Green family might take it as a declaration of war against us.”

“Maybe you should go and throw yourself at the Green family’s mercy. Who knows? For Sierra’s sake, they might toss us a lifeline.”

“Enough!” Chuck’s roar cut through the murmuring like a whip crack. His piercing gaze swept across the room. “I called you here to witness the marriage pact between the Ramirez and Mendoza families—not to gawk and gossip. Remember, you’re part of this family too. If we sink, you’re all going down with us.”

A hush fell over the room. Though resentment lingered in their eyes, no one dared to speak.

They had no real influence within the family and still harbored resentment over being left out of the spoils during the Ramirez family’s glory days. But Chuck’s words carried an undeniable truth. If the family crumbled, they would be buried in the rubble right along with it.

“Sierra, darling, put the scissors down.” Leonie forced a soothing smile, inching toward her daughter with careful steps. “We can talk this through, I promise.”

“Talk?” Sierra scoffed, her grip on the scissors tightening. “Do you take me for a fool? You mean everything’s up for discussion—except this sham of a marriage, right?”

“Mom, let me marry Mr. Mendoza.” Nellie stepped forward, her expression unreadable as she met her parents’ wary gazes. “I’m your daughter too.”

“Shut your mouth! You have no right to speak here!” Chuck’s snarl was sharp as a blade. “You’ve lost your virginity. You’re nothing but a whore. If the Mendoza family finds out, they’ll tear us to shreds. Are you trying to get us all killed?”

Each word cut through Nellie like a dagger, sharp and merciless. She stood frozen, disbelief washing over her like a tidal wave. Had those cruel, venomous words truly come from her own father?

Her face drained of all color, and the faint light in her eyes quickly dimmed.

“Nellie!” Sierra, momentarily forgetting her own turmoil, let the scissors slip from her grasp. In an instant, she was at Nellie’s side, catching her just as she swayed, ready to collapse.

“Sierra, do I even deserve to exist in this world?” Nellie’s voice trembled, barely above a whisper.

“Dad, you’re crossing the line!” Sierra’s usually sweet face was now clouded with fury, her large eyes blazing with indignation. “How can you say something like that about Nellie? She’s your daughter!”

“In the Ramirez family, only men are fit to be heirs. Women? Nothing more than pawns for the family’s gain.” Chuck let out a cold snort, his words dripping with venom. His ruthless declaration sliced through the air, sending a chill down the spine of every woman present.

Chapter 818:

Leonie’s face turned ghostly pale, her body wavering like a candle in the wind. Despair settled deep in her chest as she gazed at Chuck. It didn’t matter how much she had sacrificed, how tirelessly she had worked to elevate the family’s standing.

To outsiders, she was the elegant and dignified Mrs. Ramirez, a woman of influence. But beneath that carefully curated facade, she was merely a tool—useful only for bearing children. Over the years, she had given birth to two daughters, and that alone had been enough to earn Chuck’s scorn. His dissatisfaction had driven him into the arms of another woman, a betrayal she had chosen to ignore for the sake of her daughters.

She had clung to the hope that her intelligence and resourcefulness could make up for her lack of a son. That if she proved herself indispensable, Chuck would at least grant her some measure of respect. But after the disastrous gamble on Bart, her standing in the family crumbled like a house of cards. It was only a matter of time before she was cast aside—discarded like a broken chess piece once deemed useless.

“Listen well, all of you.” Chuck’s gaze swept across the room, devoid of warmth, stripped of any semblance of a loving father or husband. “Being born into the Ramirez family means one thing—sacrificing everything for it. We will secure this marriage alliance with the Mendoza family. Anyone who dares stand in the way will face the consequences.”

Sierra trembled, as if the very foundation of her world was crumbling. She stared at her father, utterly shaken. For years, Chuck had at least made the effort to pretend to be a father. But now? He had dropped the act completely.

“Sierra, leave this family and never come back.” Nellie’s voice was weak, barely a whisper as she leaned in close. “You have Janice and Nina. They’ll help you break free from the Ramirez family.”

“Nellie, what are you talking about? If I leave, I’m taking you with me!”

“That won’t be necessary.” Nellie’s eyes had lost their luster, the light within them fading like embers in the wind. She no longer harbored the will to fight, nor the desire to live. “After what happened the other day, I finally understand—there’s no future for me here. But Sierra, you’re different. You have a life beyond this prison. You must escape.”

“NO! Nellie, don’t talk like that! If you just hold on a little longer, we can find a way out together!”

Nellie shook her head before turning her gaze to the crazed man in front of her. “We are daughters of the Ramirez family. One of us has to stay behind to clean up the mess. I’m grateful to have had you as my sister. Because of you, I got to know what family should feel like.” With that, she rose to her feet, her spine straight, her demeanor ice-cold as she faced Chuck. “Sierra, run!”

Nellie gritted her teeth and shoved Sierra away, then lunged at their father with all her strength. Caught completely off guard, Chuck barely had time to register what was happening before he was thrown backward onto the sofa.

“Bitch! What do you think you’re doing?” he bellowed, struggling to break free.

But Nellie clung to him with a force fueled by sheer desperation, pinning him down. “Sierra, go!” Nellie snarled, using every ounce of strength she had left.

Sierra hesitated, her heart pounding violently in her chest. Her eyes burned with unshed tears as she met Nellie’s unwavering gaze—one filled with a terrifying, unshakable resolve. Nellie had already accepted her fate.

Sierra's entire body trembled, but she knew she couldn't let her sister's sacrifice be in vain. Clenching her jaw, she turned and bolted towards the door.

"Leonie! Stop her!" Chuck roared, his voice laced with fury. But Leonie merely cast him an indifferent glance, her expression unreadable.

Chapter 819:

Around them, the other members of the Ramirez family watched in silence, their eyes flickering with intrigue rather than concern. No one moved to stop Sierra. In fact, some looked entertained.

This was a family battle, one fueled by ambition and self-interest. If Sierra managed to escape the arranged marriage, the Mendoza family would undoubtedly be outraged. When that happened, they would have the perfect excuse to overthrow Chuck and install a new head of the family—someone more suited to their own interests.

Driven solely by greed, they were like a pack of wolves, always ready to strike the moment they caught the scent of opportunity.

They wouldn't hesitate to turn on their own leader if it meant seizing power for themselves.

Sierra darted toward the door, only to crash straight into a pair of firm arms.

"Now, the Ramirezes sure are having quite the get-together today."

A deep, smooth voice curled around Sierra like a warning, sending a chill down her spine. Instinct kicked in, and she tried to slip away to the side. But before she could make her escape, a strong hand shot out, yanking her back.

"Let go of me!" Sierra thrashed against the grip, her face etched with panic.

Conley smirked, tightening his hold as he pulled Sierra closer, his gaze laced with amusement. “If I’m not mistaken, you’re my future wife, aren’t you? Not exactly my type, but still, quite the little firecracker.”

“I am not! Let go of me!” Sierra balled her fist and swung at him, but Conley sidestepped her attack with effortless ease, as if toying with her.

Just then, a woman stepped forward, her presence commanding attention.

She lifted her hand and, without so much as a warning, struck Sierra across the face with a stinging slap.

The sharp, resounding slap cut through the air, instantly silencing the crowd as all eyes turned, wide with shock and trepidation.

“Bitch! You dared to lay a hand on my brother? Are you trying to sign your own death warrant?” Esther’s glare could’ve burned through steel, her face clouded with pure malice. “If it weren’t for your family groveling at our feet, we would’ve never even entertained the idea of this engagement.”

“Step aside!” Chuck finally hauled himself up, dusting off his clothes before driving a ruthless kick into Nellie’s weakened frame.

Nellie hit the floor hard, her body folding in on itself like a marionette with cut strings. Despair flickered in her eyes—she had fought with everything she had, yet she was still powerless to protect her sister.

“Mr. Mendoza! What an unexpected honor!” Chuck’s demeanor flipped in an instant, a fawning smile plastered across his face as he hurried toward Conley. “Had I known you were coming, I would’ve prepared a proper banquet in your honor.”

Conley arched a brow, smirking with undisguised amusement. “Now, where is the fun in that? If I had warned you, I would’ve missed this little spectacle.”

“Forgive us.” Chuck’s expression faltered, the ingratiating smile frozen in place as beads of cold sweat trickled down his back. He couldn’t tell whether Conley was toying with him or simply stating the obvious.

“Ah, just a bit of family discipline, that’s all! My daughters have been getting out of line, so I had to teach them a lesson.” Chuck shot a pointed glance at the servants, who were still recovering from the scene. “Well? What are you standing around for? Take them back to their rooms!”

“Not so fast, Mr. Ramirez.” Conley’s voice, laced with amusement, cut through the air like a blade. He leaned back leisurely, a knowing smirk tugging at his lips. “I came here today to meet my future wife and perhaps share a moment or two with her. If you whisk her away now, how are we supposed to get acquainted?”

Chapter 820:

“You’re absolutely right, Mr. Mendoza!” Chuck scrambled to correct himself, signaling the servants to stand down. “Sierra, pour Mr. Mendoza some coffee.”

“Over my dead body!” Sierra clutched her stinging cheek, fire blazing in her eyes as she leveled a furious glare at Conley. “Marry you? Not in a million years! I’d rather drop dead than be your wife.”

Esther stepped forward, her expression dark with disdain, and struck Sierra again—harder this time. “You don’t even deserve the honor!” She then turned to Conley, her frustration clear. “Do we really have to tie ourselves to the Ramirez family? There are plenty of noble families in Efrery. Why lower ourselves for them? They’re barely clinging to their status as one of the four great clans—one wrong step, and they’ll be nothing but a cautionary tale.”

Chuck’s face paled. He knew all too well that Esther’s words weren’t just sharp—they were the cold, hard truth. The Ramirez family was little more than a hollow shell, wobbling on the brink of collapse. If this marriage alliance with the Mendoza family fell through, they wouldn’t just lose their seat among the elite. Ruin was inevitable. Leonie’s scandal had already dragged their family name through the mud, leaving them hanging by a thread.

Yet, the rest of the Ramirez family, blind to the looming disaster, naively assumed that losing the marriage alliance would only cost Chuck his position as head of the family. Little did they realize that if the Ramirez family truly collapsed, they wouldn’t just be bystanders—they’d be dragged into the wreckage, with no way out.

“Sierra, apologize!” Chuck’s voice cracked like a whip, his sharp gaze drilling into Sierra.

“Give me one good reason why I should apologize.” Sierra clenched her jaw, defiance blazing in her eyes as she locked gazes with Chuck.

“Because you are a Ramirez. And for the sake of this family, you need to swallow your pride and act accordingly.” Chuck’s jaw tightened. “Marrying Mr. Mendoza is a privilege. Don’t be ungrateful.”

Sierra let out a cold, mocking laugh. “Oh? If it’s such a grand honor, why don’t you marry him yourself?”

Chuck’s face darkened, his features twisting with barely contained rage. Not only had Sierra insulted him, but she had also humiliated Conley in front of everyone. Predictably, Esther’s face turned an even darker shade, her fury simmering just beneath the surface.

“Mr. Mendoza, Miss Mendoza, please take a seat,” Chuck forced a stiff smile, desperate to smooth things over. “My daughter is a bit unruly. Please don’t take her words to heart.”

Conley sat down leisurely, one leg crossing over the other with effortless grace. “No offense taken. In fact, I would love to see how the Ramirez family enforces discipline. Since we’ll be in-laws soon, it’s only right to get acquainted.”

Chuck’s smile wavered. There was no mistaking it—Conley was here for a spectacle.

“Bring me the whip,” Chuck ordered.

A servant hurriedly presented a long, coiled whip with both hands.

Chuck took it, his grip firm, his gaze as cold as ice as he fixed it on Sierra.

“I’ll give you one last chance. Apologize to Mr. Mendoza and Miss Mendoza right now, or suffer the consequences.”

“Go ahead. You can beat me till I’m black and blue, but I’ll never bow to them.” Sierra’s lips curled into a smirk, fearless and unyielding. Her gaze locked onto Conley’s, a storm brewing in her eyes. “Mr. Mendoza, if you truly want to marry me, there’s only one way.”