

Wrath 821

Chapter 821:

“And what way is that?” Conley arched an eyebrow, amusement flickering in his expression.

“You’ll have to marry my corpse.”

“You wretched girl!” Chuck’s face twisted with fury as he raised the whip and lashed it down with a sharp, merciless crack.

Sierra shut her eyes, a wave of despair washing over her. What could she possibly do against a father so cruel? She knew better than to expect anyone in this room to come to her defense. This wasn’t a family—it was a cage. And inside it, she had learned a harsh, undeniable truth.

Everyone around her was nothing more than a pack of wolves, driven by greed and ambition, each ready to tear the other apart for their own gain.

But just as the whip was about to strike, a blur of movement shot forward. Nellie flung herself in front of Sierra, shielding her with her own body.

“Nellie!” Sierra’s breath caught in her throat.

The sickening crack of the whip met flesh, and Nellie’s face turned ghostly pale, her body trembling. Beads of sweat dotted her forehead, the pain searing through her like fire. Yet, through gritted teeth, she forced a reassuring smile. “Don’t be afraid, Sierra. I’m here for you.”

Tears welled in Sierra’s eyes, her voice breaking. “Nellie!”

Seeing Nellie struggling and Sierra shielding her, Chuck couldn’t shake the feeling that his position as the head of the Ramirez family was being challenged, especially with Conley observing the scene. The humiliation was overwhelming.

“Since you two are so close, you can endure the punishment together.” With those words, Chuck lifted the whip in his hand and repeatedly struck Nellie.

Nellie didn’t try to escape. She held Sierra close, using her own body as a shield to protect her sister from the harsh lashes.

“Don’t, Nellie! Move away!” Sierra’s eyes were filled with tears. She could see the bloody stripes forming on Nellie’s back and felt her sister’s blood splash onto her own skin. “Dad’s angry at me, not you. You shouldn’t have to suffer for this!”

Nellie’s complexion turned even paler, and blood trickled from the corner of her mouth, yet her eyes stayed determined and clear.

“I was once naive enough to believe that by benefiting the Ramirez family, I could gain our parents’ approval. But I’ve realized that once I’m no longer useful, I’m just another disposable tool. I wasted my youth trying to win love from such parents. Sierra, I don’t want you to endure what I did. This is the only way I can help you now,” Nellie murmured.

As Nellie appeared close to fainting from the pain, Sierra shouted desperately, “Dad, please, stop! I’ll apologize! Please, just stop the whipping.”

At last, Chuck stopped, gasping for breath. He had held nothing back, acting as though he didn’t care if he accidentally harmed his daughter.

“Well, well, Mr. Ramirez, quite the spectacle,” Conley said, clapping sarcastically with a sneer in his eyes. “You’ve certainly demonstrated what a stern and unyielding father looks like.”

Chuck hid his anger behind a forced, flattering smile. “You’re too generous, Mr. Mendoza,” he said before turning his attention to Esther. “Miss Mendoza, do you feel any relief now?”

Esther glanced at Nellie, who was barely conscious, and then lifted her chin just a bit. “Mm-hmm. However, your younger daughter needs to properly apologize to my brother. If she doesn’t... Well, you know the consequences.”

“Yes, I understand.” Chuck then faced Sierra, his expression hardening once more. “What are you waiting for? Apologize now!”

Chapter 822:

Sierra tried to get up, but Nellie weakly lifted her hand to stop her. “Don’t, Sierra.”

“Sierra, I have to admit, I didn’t like you much before.” Sierra held Nellie’s hand, tears streaming down her face, a sight that tugged at the heartstrings. “You did everything for our family, even things that compromised your morals. But now I see you were just fighting to survive in this trap. Nellie, you have my respect.”

With that, Sierra stood, turning her gaze to Conley and Esther.

Conley was half-sitting, half-lounging with an air of boredom, as if he was watching a ridiculous play, showing no respect for Sierra, his fiancée.

Sierra wiped her tears away, and seriousness crossed her youthful features. She stared at the man before her, noting his bleach-blond hair, pierced lip, and smug attitude. Her reluctance was clear as she slowly began to speak.

Suddenly, a loud crash echoed through the room. The living room door was forcefully knocked down and lay in ruins on the floor. Everyone turned in shock to see two women entering, their faces stern and cold.

“Do you think you deserve to make Sierra kneel?”

Janice’s eyes glowed with a cold intensity. Her good mood upon returning to Efrery had been completely shattered when she learned of the Ramirez family’s horrific deeds.

“Janice!” Sierra’s face lit up at the sight of her. The powerful presence Janice carried stirred something deep within her, breaking the composure she had desperately tried to maintain. “Janice, I’ve missed you so much.”

Janice felt a sting of heartache seeing Sierra in such distress. This sweet, cherished girl she had always adored was being mercilessly tormented. Janice's anger boiled over.

"Since when did the Ramirez family become so shameful?" Nina's eyes were burning with anger. Her relationship with Sierra had grown incredibly close as they often spent their leisure time shopping and sharing gossip. Despite the age difference, their bond was strong, similar to that of sisters.

"Nina!" Sierra cried out, her voice trembling. The arrival of Janice and Nina enveloped her in a comforting sense of safety.

"Oh, my dear Sierra! Please, no more tears. It breaks my heart to see you like this." Nina rushed to embrace Sierra, offering her comfort. Chuck's face took on a complex expression as he regarded the two unexpected guests.

One was Aiden's mother, and the other was someone closely connected to him. Both were individuals he couldn't risk upsetting.

Chuck quickly turned to Conley, seeking his support.

However, Conley couldn't take his eyes off Janice, his gaze bright and full of fascination, as though he were captivated. She was breathtaking—truly a sight to behold.

Conley, a man familiar with countless women, had never seen anyone quite so mesmerizing. Yet, when his gaze locked with Janice's cold, unwavering stare, a sudden wave of fear gripped his heart. It was a fleeting moment, but his chest tightened as he felt a fear he hadn't anticipated.

Conley suddenly returned to the present, his brows knitting together. He couldn't shake the feeling that Janice's gaze was strangely familiar. Yet, this was supposedly their first encounter.

"Who the hell are you?" Esther asked Janice sharply. She was never one to shy away from confrontation. "This is the Ramirez family's. You don't belong here." Advancing, she raised her hand, poised to strike Janice.

Chapter 823:

However, Janice was quicker, landing a forceful slap on Esther's cheek. "You're noisy!"

"How dare you!" Esther's eyes widened in shock. "You actually hit me?" The bodyguards quickly encircled Janice, their looks menacing, prepared to respond to the affront on Esther. But Janice ignored them and returned to Sierra's side.

Seeing Sierra's bruised face, marked clearly by a slap, Janice demanded, "Who did this?"

"Janice, I'm fine," Sierra reassured her with a weak smile, attempting to defuse the situation. She feared Janice's defense might worsen the standoff with the Mendoza family. "It doesn't hurt anymore."

"Sierra, don't be scared! Today, Janice and I will ensure you get justice," Nina announced fiercely. "I've always seen you as a friend. I won't stand by if someone harms you."

She then turned to Leonie, who appeared utterly desolate. "You're a useless mother. If you won't protect your daughter, I will. From this moment, anyone who hurts Sierra will answer to me!"

Leonie's expression changed. A bitter feeling surged within her, yet she felt a sense of relief. She had long recognized the Ramirez family's malevolence. Perhaps Sierra benefiting from such a formidable protector was for the best.

"Oh, Nellie!" Sierra remembered that Nellie was struggling and quickly helped her up. Nellie leaned against Sierra, looking up at Janice with a trace of discomfort in her gaze.

"Nellie, let's leave the past behind us," Janice said flatly. "Today, I won't let anyone who hurt Sierra get away with it."

"This is my home. You can't just boss everyone around here," Chuck said through clenched teeth. "Do you think just because Aiden supports you, you can do whatever you want?"

"Oh, precisely," Nina responded with an icy laugh, her authority as the Green family matriarch filling the room and causing a stir in everyone's heart. "Chuck, do you know why the Ramirez family isn't broke

yet? It's because my son, out of regard for Sierra, gave your family a chance. Yet, you squander that by planning to marry her to the Mendozas? You must be out of your mind."

Chuck's face blanched, and he turned to Sierra in disbelief. Could it be true? But how could Sierra, of all people, gain Aiden's favor? Was it merely because of her closeness to Nina?

At that moment, Janice fixed her gaze on Esther.

Esther shivered as she looked into Janice's cold, piercing eyes. An inexplicable fear took hold of her. "Do you want?"

"Was it you who left that mark on Sierra's face?"

"So what if it was? I'm from the Mendoza family."

However, Janice didn't let Esther finish. She raised her hand and slapped her again.

The sharp slap resounded through the room, leaving everyone in shock. Despite the presence of many bodyguards, Janice had boldly struck Esther again.

"You hit me again?" Esther yelled.

Janice's hand connected with Esther's face a third time, sending her reeling backward.

"What are you all waiting for? Take her down!" Esther cried out in rage, her face aflame with pain and humiliation. She was seething; this woman must pay!

"Stop!" Conley's command halted the bodyguards. He moved through the crowd to reach Janice.

"Excuse me, but have we met before?"

Chapter 824:

“Conley, what are you doing?” Esther was perplexed. “This woman might be attractive, but she just slapped me! And you’re flirting with her instead of defending me?”

“Shut up!” Conley’s stern look silenced Esther, sending a chill down her spine. “Remember who’s at fault for the Mendozas’ current predicament.”

Esther bit back her words, filled with bitterness yet too intimidated to retort.

Janice scoffed coldly. “With her around, it’s no surprise the Mendoza family is crumbling.”

“That’s none of your business,” Conley responded, his smile slight. “But seriously, have we met before?”

The sense of familiarity with Janice intensified. He was sure he had encountered her before, despite having no recollection of her face. A woman as striking and unforgettable as she was would surely have left a lasting impression.

Janice glanced at her hand and said casually, “Your sister slapped my friend.”

“Excuse me?” Conley didn’t understand what she meant.

Janice’s eyes turned cold and sharp, like a blade. She raised her hand and swung it fiercely across Esther’s face.

Conley, caught off guard, instinctively moved to intercept the blow. Just as his hand went up, he was struck by a powerful force.

“What?” Conley gasped, his expression one of utter shock, unable to halt Janice’s relentless advance. A resounding smack filled the air.

With considerable force, Janice’s slap knocked both Esther and Conley back several steps.

“Esther!” Conley shouted as he stumbled up, only to see Esther lying on the floor, blood trickling from the corner of her mouth.

“You will regret this!” Conley stared at Janice, seething with fury. “You’re not leaving this place alive today.”

Under his direction, the bodyguards tightened their circle once more. At the same time, Chuck subtly signaled the nearby servants with a nod, coordinating their efforts to encircle Janice and help Conley. Nina, holding Sierra close, maintained a stoic expression. She was confident Janice had a strategy, given her bold actions.

“Won’t leave here alive, you say?” A crisp, authoritative voice cut through the tension.

Heads turned to the entrance as a tall figure made a confident entrance. Aiden entered, hands casually tucked in his pockets, followed by his own entourage of stern-faced bodyguards.

His sharp gaze and commanding presence caused a palpable tension, prompting a collective breath-hold among those gathered.

“Mr. Mendoza, what right do you have to address my woman in such a manner?” Aiden demanded.

As Conley watched the formidable figure approach, a sense of familiarity unnerved him.

“Janice, your next move?” Aiden inquired as he reached her side, his stern demeanor softening to a tender concern.

With a composed look at the bodyguards encircling her, Janice said, “Sierra has suffered enough. It’s time the Ramirez family faced bankruptcy.”

“No, this can’t happen!” Chuck’s composure shattered as he heard Janice’s words. “The Ramirez family is one of the four elite families. You can’t just...”

Aiden scoffed, his face twisting into a sneer. "One of the four elite families? It seems you're quite mistaken. In Efrery, there's no such thing as four elite families." His voice was steady, not loud, yet it echoed with undeniable authority. "The Green family stands alone at the top. This notion of four elite families is something I've let you believe for my own entertainment."

Chapter 825:

His arrogance was evident, filling the room with its intensity.

Conley watched Aiden, his eyes wide with shock. He had always considered himself quite bold, but next to Aiden, he felt practically insignificant. The sheer brazenness of Aiden's proclamation was staggering.

"With this, I officially remove the Ramirez family from the equation. And Chuck, you're now on the Green family's blacklist. Anyone caught aiding you will be marked as our enemy." For Chuck, these words meant the end.

The other members of the Ramirez family grasped the severity of their predicament and started to beg.

"Mr. Green, please, we have no ties to Chuck! Banish him if you must, but spare the rest of us!"

"Yes, we were merely summoned to observe. We were unaware of the circumstances!"

Their appeals became more desperate and unreserved.

Aiden mocked their pleas, saying, "You're pleading with the wrong individual."

He then pointed to Sierra. "She's the one you ought to be pleading with." Stunned by his gesture, the Ramirez family turned their gaze to Sierra. Only a short while earlier, they had reveled in Sierra's difficulties. Now, their very fate hung on her willingness to forgive.

"Sierra, remember I'm your uncle! You can't just ignore me!"

"Sierra, your aunt is begging you! Please, show some compassion and let me off!"

Witnessing her so-called family, who had always looked down on her, Sierra couldn't suppress a sneer. The sight of their desperate, groveling faces was both strange and deeply satisfying.

"Sierra, you're in control. Do as you wish," Janice murmured, her voice a blend of calm and resolve that bolstered Sierra's determination.

"Thanks, Janice," Sierra expressed her gratitude.

Turning to the Ramirez family, her expression was cold and unyielding. In the past, she would have hesitated, but after experiencing the harsh realities of human nature, she had learned an important lesson. Showing mercy to these miserable souls would only mean cruelty to herself. Should she offer them help today, their loyalty would vanish the moment she faced adversity.

"I am cutting all ties with the Ramirez family as of now. Your plight is no longer my concern."

"You can't just ignore us, Sierra!"

"Ungrateful creature! May you be cursed!" As their final hopes faded, the Ramirez family abandoned any pretense and openly hurled curses towards Sierra.

"Get them out of here." Aiden's voice cut through the air, accompanied by a casual flick of his wrist. His men moved with practiced efficiency, encircling the crowd before them.

Both the Ramirez family and the Mendoza family's bodyguards fell in line as helplessly as sheep before wolves, their resistance crumbling to dust.

As Conley observed Aiden's masterful control of the situation, the whispered legends of Efrery and Cloverhill finally crystallized into understanding. This was the power that made Aiden Green a name that commanded fear and respect.

"Mr. Green, show mercy! Spare the Ramirez family!" Chuck's desperation pierced the air as he turned to Sierra, his voice breaking. "Sierra, I'm your father! Convince Mr. Green to release us!"

Chapter 826:

Sierra met his plea with steel in her eyes, unwavering. "When your whip tore into my flesh, did you see me as your daughter then? Chuck, consider your life spared as the final payment for your years of claimed fatherhood. Otherwise, your blood would have already stained these floors."

Suddenly, Leonie's laughter erupted, raw and tinged with madness. "Oh, Chuck! Look at yourself now. The power you've chased your entire life now rests in the hands of the daughter you cast aside. Isn't fate beautifully cruel?"

Her gaze softened as she turned to Sierra and Nellie. "My girls, I've failed you both. From this moment forward, live life on your own terms."

With those words hanging in the air, Leonie grabbed Chuck's arm and began pulling him away.

"Leonie, what are you doing? Let go of me!" Chuck yelled.

"Chuck, we're bound together, for better or worse." Leonie's smile sent ice through Chuck's veins.

As the Ramirez family was led away, only Conley and the unconscious Esther remained.

Conley stood frozen before Aiden and Janice, barely daring to draw breath.

"Mr. Mendoza, it's time to settle our debts," Aiden stated coolly.

"While the Mendoza family's influence may have waned here, we remain a force to be reckoned with. Harm me, and you'll unleash a storm of retribution," Conley retorted.

Janice's laugh carried winter's chill as she stepped forward, her eyes boring into Conley's soul. "Didn't you just question if we'd met before?"

Conley stood motionless, confusion etched across his features as he stared at Janice.

“White Goose Mountain,” she said simply.

Those three words struck Conley like thunder.

“You’re MO?” Conley’s eyes widened in disbelief as he looked at Janice. Then he quickly turned to Aiden. “And you’re Peter?”

The mask of cold indifference on Aiden’s face cracked at the mention of that name. He shot Janice a look of playful reproach, his eyes speaking volumes.

Janice couldn’t suppress a soft chuckle, offering him a reassuring glance. Even she hadn’t anticipated Prescott choosing such a name for someone like Aiden.

“Conley, now you know why I slapped Esther earlier?” Janice’s voice turned razor-sharp as she narrowed her eyes.

Conley’s strength deserted him in an instant. His knees gave way with a resounding thud as he collapsed to the floor, prostrating himself before them.

The spectacle left Sierra and Nellie frozen in disbelief.

The once-arrogant and superior man was now utterly defeated. How could this be possible?

“Please, I beg your mercy!” Conley’s voice cracked as he pressed his forehead against the floor. “What happened back then was nothing but an accident. My sister was manipulated by Harlan, led into making a devastating mistake. If you would show clemency to the Mendoza family, we will pledge our absolute loyalty to you both.”

The Mendoza family had fled Cloverhill in desperate haste, hoping to escape MO's retribution. Yet fate had played a wicked game, leading them blindly into MO's own territory, where they'd committed the fatal error of attacking her friend.

As Conley witnessed the commanding presence Aiden and Janice exuded, he realized with growing dread that their capabilities far exceeded anything he had imagined possible.

Chapter 827:

"You're a smart man." Janice's voice carried a hint of amusement as she studied him, her gaze almost playful. "Last time, our wager stated you'd become my slave. I chose to overlook that debt because you handed over the Eternity Building..."

"I'll be at your service!" Conley interrupted, agreeing without hesitation.

"No, you misunderstand." Janice's eyes narrowed dangerously, a cunning smile dancing across her lips. "I want every Mendoza at my beck and call."

The blood drained from Conley's face as his pupils dilated in shock. "This..."

"I'll give you one day to convince Bain. If the answer is no, then the..."

"The Mendoza family will vanish from Efrery."

Her tone was deceptively casual, as if she were discussing dinner plans rather than their fate.

But Conley knew better than anyone that her words weren't empty threats. Her power to make good on such promises was precisely why his family had fled Cloverhill in the first place.

"But if you agree, I won't just spare your family. I'll help you reclaim your place in Cloverhill," she added. "I'll give you an answer tomorrow."

“Janice, I’m so glad you came. If you hadn’t...” Sierra trailed off, the weight of recent events pressing down on her. Even now, the thought of what could have happened if Janice hadn’t arrived in time sent a shiver down her spine.

“We noticed something was off with you lately, so we decided to check in,” Janice said, studying her carefully. She sighed, ruffling Sierra’s hair with a gentle touch. “But we never imagined the Ramirez family would fall into such chaos.”

“My phone was confiscated. I couldn’t reply to messages, couldn’t reach out. Otherwise, I would have told Nina everything sooner.” Sierra’s expression darkened with frustration.

“It’s all over now, Sierra.” Nina cupped Sierra’s face with a featherlight touch, her fingers ghosting over the faint marks. Her heart ached at the sight. “But tell me honestly—were we too harsh in handling your family?”

Sierra didn’t hesitate to shake her head. “That house may have been where I was born, but it was never a home. It was a prison.”

Her gaze drifted to Nellie, who was slumped against her, pale and exhausted. “We once thought the Ramirez family was our safe haven, but our parents’ actions shattered that illusion. They did this to themselves.”

Nellie lifted her eyes. Her smile was faint, but it was real. “Sierra, you’re free now. No one can force you into an arranged marriage ever again.”

“And so are you, Nellie.” Sierra clasped her sister’s hands, squeezing them firmly. “No matter what you’ve endured, as long as you don’t give up, there’s always a way forward.”

“Can I really?”

A storm of emotions churned inside Nellie—remorse, self-loathing, exhaustion. She had made so many mistakes, wandered so far down the wrong path. Perhaps this was karma—her punishment for everything she’d done. Maybe someone like her, someone so stained, deserved nothing more than death.

“Nellie.” Janice spoke her name with an unfamiliar softness, like a breeze sweeping over an open wound, soothing yet unexpected. Nellie blinked in surprise. It was the first time she had heard Janice address her with such warmth.

“If you’ve lost the will to live, then live for Sierra.”

“For Sierra?” Nellie echoed, stunned. She turned to her sister, her unfocused eyes searching until something flickered to life within them.

Chapter 828:

“You survived this because of Sierra,” Janice continued. “That means you owe her.”

“Janice...” Sierra looked at her, conflicted. “Nellie did what she had to do to survive. I don’t blame her for that.”

“Janice isn’t blaming Nellie, dear. She’s saving her.” Nina stepped in, drawing Sierra close.

Sierra blinked. “Saving her?”

“Your sister is lost. After everything, she doesn’t know how to move forward. Giving her a reason might just be what she needs to keep going.”

Understanding dawned on Sierra.

Now, Nellie’s eyes were bright. “Janice, thank you. I get it now. I do owe Sierra. From now on, I’ll live for her.”

It was quite ironic, really. Once upon a time, Nellie had seen Janice as nothing but an enemy—someone she had fought tooth and nail to tear down. Yet here she was, saved by the very person she had once tried to destroy.

“Janice, it’s time,” Aiden reminded her, his eyes flicking to his watch. Right. The press conference. Stephen was about to be officially introduced as White Whale Entertainment’s newest artist.

She turned to Sierra and Nina. “I have to go. Aiden and I have some business to take care of, but we’ll see you soon.”

Sierra smiled. “Alright. Take care.”

With that, the pair left and headed toward White Whale Entertainment.

“Aiden, was it really necessary to buy an entire building just to start an entertainment company?” Janice stole a glance at Aiden.

He smirked, a glint of mischief in his eyes. “Why? Are you so touched that you’re considering marrying me?”

Janice rolled her eyes at him. “I just think it’s excessive. I started the company to help my brother, not to build an empire. If I ever decide it’s pointless, I might just shut it down.”

Aiden’s playful expression faded. His gaze turned sharp as he studied her intently.

“What? Why are you looking at me like that?”

“I bought the whole building to prove one thing. No matter how small or fleeting your words are, I’ll take them seriously. I’ll only ever give you the best.”

The sincerity in his tone, coupled with the depth in his eyes, sent an unexpected flutter through Janice’s heart.

She quickly masked it with a teasing smirk. “Aiden, have you been studying romance novels lately? I never expected someone as cool as you to have such a sentimental side.”

“You can just pretend you don’t know.” A faint blush dusted his cheeks, betraying his embarrassment. He couldn’t help but recall the moment Nina had discovered his secret stash of romance novels.

Seeing his flustered reaction, Janice burst into laughter. “Aiden, keep up the good work.”

He rolled his eyes, feigning exasperation. “Now that I’ve pleased you, shouldn’t I get some kind of reward?”

“Reward? What reward?” Janice asked.

Aiden stared at Janice with a pout.

Janice’s lips curved into a teasing smile before she suddenly leaned in and planted a soft kiss on Aiden’s cheek.

Chapter 829:

Aiden’s eyes widened in surprise. His heart kicked up a notch, and in his flustered excitement, his foot slammed down on the brakes. The car lurched to an abrupt stop, nearly sending Janice flying out of her seat.

“Aiden! What on earth was that?”

“Sorry, got a little carried away and hit the brakes by accident.”

Janice let out an exasperated sigh. “Well, that’s the last time I reward you. Any more of this, and we’ll both end up in the hospital.”

“In that case, I guess I’ll have to let Braylen drive next time.” Aiden made the suggestion, though the grin tugging at his lips betrayed his amusement.

The highly anticipated press conference was set at the prestigious White Whale Tower, the headquarters of White Whale Entertainment. The banquet hall gleamed with opulence—crystal

chandeliers cast a golden glow, and floral arrangements adorned every table, exuding an air of sophistication.

As soon as the media received their invitations, reporters swarmed the venue like bees to honey. After all, Stephen, the industry's newest award-winning actor, was making a shocking career move. The fact that he was jumping ship to another agency sent ripples through the entertainment world, setting the stage for a spectacle no one wanted to miss.

"Stephen owes his entire career to Wendy Chadwick, and now, out of nowhere, he's switching agencies? Something's not adding up."

"Exactly! There wasn't even a whisper about this before. Could this be a high-stakes power play between two corporate titans?"

"I would bet good money on this press conference turning into a battlefield. Someone as vengeful as Wendy won't let this slide without a fight."

Seasoned journalists knew the business well, and they were more than eager to witness the inevitable fireworks. If tempers flared and drama unfolded, tomorrow's headlines would practically write themselves.

Stephen, as poised as ever, made his entrance in a tailored navy-blue suit. His hair, styled in a sleek middle part with perfectly faded sides, only enhanced his already striking features.

With just the right touch of grooming, his flawless face seemed almost unreal—especially those mesmerizing, soulful eyes that had the power to leave every single woman in the room momentarily breathless.

"Stephen, you truly live up to your reputation as the nation's heartthrob. With looks like that, even I might just reconsider my standards." Leah, arms folded and eyes alight with mischief, gave him an appreciative once-over.

Stephen let out a light chuckle, his expression modest yet charming. "You flatter me, Ms. Sugden. I'm just a regular guy, not some heartthrob."

Leah rolled her eyes, smirking. “Oh, please. If you’re ‘ordinary,’ then what does that make the rest of the male population?”

She paused for a moment, briefly thinking of Aiden, then quickly corrected herself. “Anyway, you’re Janice’s brother. The two of you hit the genetic jackpot—that’s undeniable. Some people are just born to shine.”

At the mention of Janice, Stephen’s expression softened, his smile carrying a trace of warmth.

He owed everything to her. Without Janice, he never would have had the courage to break free from Wendy’s grasp.

A staff member approached. “Ms. Sugden, it’s time. We should head to the stage.”

Chapter 830:

“Got it!” Leah nodded before turning to Stephen, her playful demeanor giving way to something more serious. “Stephen, after today, you get to start fresh. No more looking back.”

Stephen took a deep breath. He could feel the weight of the moment pressing down on him. Never in his wildest dreams had he imagined making such a daring move, yet here he was—on the verge of stepping into a new chapter of his life. “Ms. Sugden, I’m counting on you.”

“Don’t worry. Janice’s brother is like a brother to me, so I’ll take good care of you.” Realizing how intimate that sounded, Leah quickly cleared her throat and added with a teasing grin, “As your manager, of course. My job is to turn you into an international sensation.”

The press conference venue buzzed with anticipation. Reporters crowded the room, their cameras at the ready, eager to capture what was bound to be a game-changing moment in the entertainment industry.

They all knew that if this event unfolded smoothly, it would mark a monumental change in the entertainment world.

White Whale Entertainment, though newly established, had already made a statement by acquiring and renaming an entire building—White Whale Tower—as its headquarters.

Despite only having one signed artist, the company operated with an astonishing level of extravagance. Their biggest gamble? Fully financing a blockbuster film crafted specifically for Stephen.

This level of extravagance was all made possible by Aiden.

As the head of the Green family and the undisputed power in Efrery, Aiden had the influence to reshape entire industries with a single decision.

Yet, the most formidable man in the city had poured his resources into building an entertainment empire—for no other reason than to see Janice smile.

Rumors swirled about the true nature of Janice and Stephen's relationship. Beyond their on-screen chemistry in their popular TV show, what other secrets lay hidden?

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining us today. White Whale Entertainment has several groundbreaking announcements to share," the host began, his voice steady yet charged with excitement. "We trust that the media will report with integrity. Now, let's welcome our esteemed president, Leah Sugden, to the stage."

Leah stepped forward, poised and elegant, draped in a breathtaking crimson gown that accentuated every graceful movement. Her eyes, sharp and expressive, gleamed under the lights, while bold red lips and cascading waves of hair framed her striking face.

The moment she appeared, a frenzy of camera flashes erupted. Though Stephen was the star of the day, Leah's magnetic presence effortlessly stole a share of the spotlight.

It was inevitable—once Leah's photos hit the internet, a new wave of admirers was sure to follow.

Leah took her seat with effortless grace, her every movement radiating an air of refinement. Poised and dignified, she commanded attention without uttering a single word.

“And now, let’s give a warm welcome to our recently acclaimed, award-winning actor—Stephen White!” said the host.

The moment Stephen stepped into the room, camera flashes erupted like fireworks. With his tall frame, chiseled features, and undeniable charisma, he looked like he had walked straight out of the pages of a romance novel.

As he sat beside Leah, the two formed a picture-perfect pair.

“Hey, did you catch that? Stephen’s in a blue suit, and Ms. Sugden is rocking a red gown. Red and blue—a classic power combo! They complement each other so well.”