

Wrath 881

Chapter 881:

“Dad, is Mom really leaving us?” Conley’s brows furrowed, his voice laced with concern.

“We truly miscalculated this time. I never expected Esther to be so impulsive as to launch an attack on MO.” Bain’s face was etched with exhaustion, his expression heavy with regret and helplessness. “But even if we hadn’t made our move, MO would have eliminated her anyway.”

Conley’s expression flickered with doubt. “Dad, what makes you so certain?”

“Do you have any idea who Aiden really is?” Bain’s gaze darkened. “That man isn’t just some businessman—he’s a hardened warrior, forged in battle overseas. You really think he didn’t see through Esther’s intentions? Had we hesitated for even a moment, Aiden would’ve taken her out himself.”

Bain exhaled slowly. “Her fate was sealed the moment she acted against MO. At least by handling it ourselves, we ensured the Mendoza family’s survival.”

Conley felt a chill crawl up his spine. No wonder Bain had insisted on securing the best sniper. Now, everything made sense.

Had Aiden retaliated first, the Mendoza family wouldn’t have stood a chance.

“So Janice and Aiden had figured out from the beginning that I orchestrated the assassination. Yet, they didn’t expose us outright. They actually gave us an opening.”

“Exactly! They are dangerous beyond belief. We should consider ourselves lucky we took precautions. If we hadn’t, with MO and JE’s combined influence, we would’ve been completely wiped out.” Conley shuddered, feeling a weight settle in his chest.

As a renowned surgeon alone, Janice was already beyond the reach of most. But now, knowing she was also JE? Even the formidable Welch family wouldn’t dare cross her.

“Conley, listen carefully. From this point on, we must solidify our ties with Janice.” Bain narrowed his eyes, his voice dropping to a grave tone. “Now that we’ve made our decision, there’s no turning back—we must see it through to the end. If we demonstrate unwavering loyalty, the Mendoza family’s fate might turn out even better than before.”

“Understood!”

The night was cool and quiet. Janice and Aiden had just left the banquet, looking for a place to talk with Kenneth.

Unexpectedly, Liliana caught up to them. “JE, can you take me in so that I can learn from you?”

Janice glanced at Liliana. “You never actually fell for Alissa’s tricks from the start, did you?”

“No!” Liliana said candidly. “I just used her to compete with you. And through that, I realized the big gap separating us. I’m nowhere near your level.”

Janice narrowed her eyes slightly, intrigued by the intensity in Liliana’s expression. “When did you figure out I’m JE?”

Aiden was taken aback upon hearing that. “Wait, Janice, are you saying Liliana has known you’re JE all along?”

“Yes.” Janice nodded. “Her obsession with competing against me stemmed from the fact that she knew my true identity. So, it was JE she was determined to challenge.”

Aiden hesitated, thinking about the interactions between Janice and Liliana. He realized Liliana had indeed been acting strangely. She had come to challenge Janice for revenge against JE, yet her eyes held no hatred, only a consuming obsession.

Chapter 882:

Her obsession wasn't merely about challenging Janice. It was about JE, her idol, imprinted on her soul.

"I went to your place," Liliana said calmly. "At first, I just wanted to learn more about you, but when I saw that graffiti, I knew one thing for certain. You're JE."

"You're so sure of my identity just from a piece of graffiti?" Janice asked, amused.

"I've studied countless works by JE. I can recognize that unique essence in every piece," Liliana replied, her hands moving as if cradling an invisible painting. "It's a feeling I can't ignore. And I trust that feeling."

Janice smiled. "You're smart. Find Leah tomorrow. I mean the CEO of Freak Design. She'll set up a new identity for you."

Liliana's eyes lit up. "Thank you for taking me in."

"Uh..." Janice was taken aback, feeling a bit helpless. "I don't recall agreeing to take you in."

"You can refuse all you want, but you are my teacher in my eyes. I've followed in your footsteps all these years. You shaped and made who I am today."

Janice had never encountered anyone this obsessed before. People like that could be both a blessing and a threat. The loyal ones would always remain faithful, but if they ever became enemies, they'd be as formidable as Leonidas.

Janice reflected on the game with Alissa. It seemed like she had won, but the true winner was Leonidas because he had exposed her true identity.

After parting ways with Liliana, Janice entered the car and followed Kenneth's. She leaned against the window and let out a deep sigh. Aiden, sitting beside her, could tell exactly how she felt.

He asked, "Do you want me to keep tonight under wraps?"

"There's no point." Janice shook her head, a cold glint flickering in her eyes. "Sooner or later, I'll have to face the Welch family head-on. Being exposed now might slow them down for a while."

"Alright. Whatever you decide, I've got your back."

Janice glanced at Aiden, sensing his quiet concern and unwavering support, which eased her restless mind.

"I'm glad you're here. Otherwise, I'd be upset all day." Janice smiled, her honesty evident. She had always handled unpleasant matters on her own. Despite being close to Leah, Prescott, and Costello, they felt more like younger siblings to her. How could she possibly complain to them? She only felt equal with Aiden, knowing they could rely on each other.

"Is that all?" Aiden raised an eyebrow, playfully ruffling Janice's hair. "Shouldn't you thank me more practically?"

Janice rolled her eyes. "You're so greedy."

"Oh, that breaks my heart..."

Before Aiden could finish, Janice leaned in and kissed him on the cheek. Aiden's pupils contracted, his heart skipping a beat for a moment. Regret flickered across his face as he quickly took back his words.

"But my heart will always race for you."

"You've been reading too many romance novels. You're starting to sound like one of the characters," Janice teased.

Aiden's radiant smile faltered. "Janice, stop making fun of me."

Seeing this side of Aiden amused Janice.

Knock, knock.

Chapter 883:

The car rolled to a stop.

Kenneth tapped on the window, interrupting their conversation. "Shall we talk here?" he suggested.

Janice glanced outside and realized they had arrived at a dock. The place was secluded, with only the whisper of the breeze and the rhythmic crash of the waves. It was the perfect spot for a private conversation.

"Kenneth, you may begin," said Janice.

Kenneth gave a slight nod. Janice sensed a newfound reverence in his gaze.

"The Welch brothers came to see me today. They want me to track someone down. A man with the surname White."

Janice stayed composed, choosing not to respond right away.

Kenneth continued, "If I'm not wrong, the person they're after is Stephen White, right?"

A salty breeze rolled in from the sea, lifting strands of Janice's hair as she stood there, poised and unreadable. Her striking features betrayed nothing of her thoughts.

Behind her, Aiden absentmindedly toyed with the bracelet on his wrist, a fleeting glint of something far more dangerous flickering in his eyes.

"Kenneth, can I trust you?" After a long pause, Janice finally spoke, her tone devoid of warmth as she fixed Kenneth with an unreadable gaze.

Kenneth felt an uneasy tightness in his chest. There was something unsettling about the way she looked at him—calm on the surface, yet carrying an edge of quiet danger.

He exhaled slowly, realizing that in her eyes, he still hadn't proven himself completely trustworthy. That realization stung more than he cared to admit.

"Of course. If I had any ill intentions, we wouldn't even be having this conversation."

"Alright." Janice gave a small nod, her gaze drifting toward the endless expanse of the sea. "Do you know anything about the White family from Cloverhill?"

"I don't."

"Twenty years ago, over a hundred members of the White family were wiped out in cold blood. And the one responsible was the Welch family." Kenneth's expression faltered for a split second.

He knew the tangled web of power struggles in Cloverhill, but to erase an entire bloodline—that wasn't something done on a whim. No one would carry out such a brutal act without an unshakable grudge driving them.

"Although the Welch family erased every trace, they missed one person—Stephen." A flicker of sorrow passed through Janice's eyes as she spoke. She took a deep breath of the salty sea air, her chest tightening. "Now that they've discovered he's alive, they're determined to finish what they started. I knew Mateo would send people after him, but I didn't expect him to be this ruthless—to send his own sons." It was clear Mateo wouldn't stop until Stephen was gone for good.

Kenneth was silent for a moment, then lifted his gaze to Janice. "What exactly is your relationship with Stephen?"

Janice turned to face him. "You must have some idea. Otherwise, you wouldn't have sought me out to talk about this, would you?"

Kenneth gave a slow nod. "Stephen worked for Wendy, but you took him away from her. That means he's important to you."

His gaze flicked briefly to Aiden before he continued, "From what I know, he's not someone you have romantic feelings for, which means your connection to him runs much deeper."

Chapter 884:

In the blink of an eye, Aiden closed the distance between Kenneth and himself, his hand tightening around Kenneth's throat. His murderous intent was palpable, his grip unwavering, as if waiting for Janice's command to snap Kenneth's neck.

Yet Kenneth didn't flinch. He simply met Aiden's glare head-on, unfazed. "Aiden, don't."

At Janice's words, Aiden released his grip, stepping back into position behind her. "Kenneth, Janice might trust you, but I don't."

Kenneth exhaled sharply, rubbing his neck before letting out a quiet, mirthless chuckle. "I don't need your trust." He turned his attention back to Janice. "As long as she does, that's enough."

Aiden's frown deepened, his fists clenching at his sides. What was Kenneth so smug about? Did he really think that saying that would win Janice over? How naive.

"Janice, whatever you decide, I'll back you up," Kenneth said firmly. "How about we set a trap and take out the Welch brothers for good?"

Janice dismissed the idea outright. "Killing them would be too easy. It's not the kind of payback I want from them." A cold glint flashed in her eyes. "They take such pride in their power—so I'll crush them in the very thing they believe makes them untouchable."

Kenneth was momentarily taken aback. So Janice planned to take on the Welch family head-on.

There had been times when he worried she was overestimating herself—that even with Aiden’s support, challenging the Welch family would be nearly impossible. But tonight, after learning her true identity as JE, he finally understood. Janice wasn’t just talking. She had the power to back up every word.

“Alright,” Kenneth said, inhaling deeply. “I’ll help you. Maybe it’s presumptuous of me, but I’ll do whatever I can.”

“Kenneth, don’t you find it a little ridiculous to say that?” Aiden arched a brow, his tone laced with mockery. “You’re not even the head of the Delgado family yet. What gives you the right to make such promises? Talk alone won’t get you anywhere.”

Kenneth’s jaw tightened. Aiden wasn’t wrong. Without real authority over the Delgado family, his words meant nothing. If he truly wanted to help Janice, he had to claim his rightful position—because going up against the Welch family without power was just wishful thinking.

“Look. I’m not here to fight with you, Aiden.” Kenneth let out a slow sigh. “I just want to do everything I can for Janice. That’s all.”

Aiden was momentarily caught off guard. He studied Kenneth, a flicker of surprise in his eyes. What did he mean by that? Had he given up on pursuing Janice?

Kenneth began, “Janice, you’re an amazing person. I know there’s a gap between us, so let’s just stay friends. It’s what’s best for both of us.”

“I’m glad you see it that way,” Janice smiled, her expression composed as she met Kenneth’s gaze. “We’ll be great friends.”

Kenneth finally felt a sense of relief. He no longer had to worry about winning Janice over or playing mind games with Aiden.

People constantly compared him to Aiden, but Kenneth had always remained focused on his own goal—supporting his family.

To Kenneth, Aiden wasn't a rival but a benchmark, a standard to push himself further.

Just then, Kenneth's phone buzzed sharply, its ringtone cutting through the quiet night air.

Kenneth checked the caller ID, his brows lifting slightly in surprise. He glanced at Janice and Aiden. The caller was unmistakably from the Welch family.

Chapter 885:

"Mr. Welch, it's so late. Is there something urgent?"

"Any updates on that person?"

Kenneth arched a brow, a smirk playing on his lips. "Aren't you a bit impatient? It's barely been a day. How could I have any news so soon?"

"I need answers, and fast. Mr. Delgado, don't disappoint me." Calvin's voice was cold, laced with barely restrained fury. "Find this person for me, and the Welch family will ensure your family rises to the top in Efrery."

"Understood. I'll do my best."

Kenneth let out a slow breath after ending the call. "Looks like Calvin's already caught wind of tonight's mess with Alissa."

Janice shrugged, her tone indifferent. "Alissa may have stirred up a disaster and cost the Welch family dearly, but she's still a Welch. She'll be fine."

Meanwhile, Alissa stood with her head lowered, bruised and trembling. The arrogance and defiance she once carried had vanished. Now, she was nothing but a quivering wreck in front of her brothers.

Calvin ended his call with Kenneth and, in a sudden burst of rage, hurled his phone to the floor. The sharp crack of impact made Alissa jolt, her fear intensifying.

“Calvin, I messed up! Please, just forgive me!”

“Forgive you?” Calvin narrowed his eyes, staring intently into Alissa’s. His gaze was so cold that Alissa couldn’t bring herself to meet it. “You threw away our house in the heart of Cloverhill and dragged the Welch name through the mud. Do you really think a simple ‘sorry’ will fix that?”

“Calvin, I don’t think our dear sister fully grasps just how crucial that house was,” Jensen said, his fingers curling into a fist. His looming presence made Alissa’s knees feel weak.

At that moment, Jensen’s phone buzzed, cutting through the tense silence.

“It’s Dad,” Jensen muttered, glancing at the screen.

“Pick up,” Calvin exhaled slowly, knowing there was no hiding tonight’s disaster any longer.

Jensen gave a curt nod, then tapped the screen, switching the call to speaker.

Mateo’s voice boomed through the phone. “Calvin, what the hell is going on? Why couldn’t I get through to you? And why is Alissa ignoring my calls?”

“Dad, there’s been an incident. Alissa is facing the consequences,” Calvin replied coldly.

“Dad, I’m sorry! Please, tell them to stop! I can’t handle this!” Alissa pleaded, her voice trembling.

Mateo sensed something was wrong, and his tone turned icy. “What happened?”

“Dad, our sister lost the house and publicly begged for mercy. A fine humiliation for the Welch family,” Calvin said, his voice as hard as steel as he adjusted his glasses.

“What did you just say?” Mateo’s fury crackled through the speaker. “Alissa, you swore this competition was a guaranteed victory!” His rage sent a shiver down Alissa’s spine.

“Dad, I had no idea things would go sideways! It’s all Liliana’s fault— she didn’t stick to my plan, and that’s why I lost. But I found out something big. JE is Janice.”

“JE?” Mateo’s shock was palpable. “You’re telling me JE is in Efrery and she’s with Aiden?”

Mateo wasn’t blind to Aiden’s influence. He was well aware that Aiden had once married Janice, only for it to end in divorce. Now, the man was clearly determined to win her back.

Chapter 886:

But never in his wildest guesses had he imagined that Janice was JE herself.

JE was a force even the Welch family had to tread carefully around, and now, thanks to Alissa’s recklessness, they were tangled in a dangerous web.

“Dad, don’t you get it? The person I went up against was JE herself. We never stood a chance!” Alissa sobbed. “I was set up, I swear! Some guy named Leonidas Miller pushed me into this.”

“Leonidas Miller?” Mateo’s tone dropped to a cutting chill. He realized Alissa was nothing more than a pawn, and worse, she had already been discarded.

“Just a second.”

Mateo paused and called someone else.

After a brief pause, a man picked up. A dark, chilling voice filled the line. “Mr. Welch, how can I be of service?”

Alissa’s eyes went wide the moment she heard the voice. She gasped, “It’s him! That’s Leonidas!”

“Hi, Ms. Welch!” Leonidas’ tone held a teasing edge. “My condolences on your loss today.”

“Leonidas, you deceived me! If you hadn’t guaranteed my win, I wouldn’t have risked so much!”

“I’m sorry,” Leonidas said with feigned regret. “Who could have guessed Janice had concealed herself so thoroughly? Had I known her real identity, I wouldn’t have let you take such a fall.”

“Dad, who is this guy? Why do both you and Alissa know him?” Calvin asked, his brow furrowed in confusion.

“He’s a guy I hired for overseas operations,” Mateo answered, his tone serious. “At first, he was merely a tool to take care of certain unsavory tasks and help expand business abroad. But now, I see the truth—someone has been working against me in the shadows.”

“Mr. Welch, just name them. I’ll handle it for you!”

“Leonidas, drop the act.” Mateo’s voice turned frigid, simmering with restrained fury. “You went behind my back with Alissa. Don’t you think you owe me an explanation?”

“Everything I did was for the Welch family,” Leonidas sighed, a wry smile tugging at his lips. “Who could have foreseen such an unexpected twist—that Janice is JE?”

“Hah. Don’t play dumb. You knew all along,” Mateo scoffed, his sharp instincts unshaken. “I don’t know your reason for going after her, but you must have known she’s JE from the start. You threw Alissa into the fray just to use her as a pawn, didn’t you?”

Confronted by Mateo’s accusations, Leonidas said nothing.

The room fell into a tense silence, yet thoughts swirled in everyone’s minds. Mateo’s trusted man had turned against him.

Alissa was left reeling; she had been betrayed by her father's own confidant.

"Mr. Welch, your sharp instincts never fail." Leonidas exhaled, his voice turning cold. "Since you've figured it out, tell me—what now? Will you crush me, or...?"

"Tell me everything you know," Mateo ordered, his voice sharp. "If you do, I'll let this slide. But you need to give me something worthwhile to make up for your blunder."

"Mr. Welch, you're making me nervous."

"Stop stalling," Mateo scoffed, his tone icy. "You pushed Alissa to go against Janice because you have a personal vendetta, didn't you? And I'm well aware that you and Janice grew up in the same orphanage. That means you know her inside and out."

Chapter 887:

Mateo's revelation hit Leonidas like a punch. He never expected Mateo to have dug so deeply into his past.

"Mr. Welch, I have something valuable to share," Leonidas said, his voice turning grave. "But before I talk, can you guarantee my safety?"

"I don't break my promises."

"Fine. The man you want is Stephen White."

"Stephen White?"

Alissa froze for a moment, then blurted out, "I know him! We met on a show once."

"Alissa, who exactly is Stephen White?"

“He’s an actor. He recently won the Best Actor award. He had recently joined Janice’s newly established entertainment company, officially becoming an artist under White Whale Entertainment.”

The room tensed—something about this didn’t sit right.

Alissa had been completely outplayed by Janice. With Stephen now signed under her company, it was clear he had fallen under Janice’s protection.

“Dad, this just got messy,” Calvin muttered, his brows knit. “We could’ve handled Stephen easily before. But with Janice being JE, we have to move cautiously if we plan to take him out.”

“With JE shielding that bastard, he’s a real problem for us. But he has to die,” Mateo growled, his teeth clenched. “Find someone that opposes Janice and let them take the blame. Even if she gets suspicious, she won’t have proof to act against us. And even if things turn ugly with her, the Welches don’t fear her. JE Consortium may be powerful, but their stronghold is overseas. Their reputation won’t save them from us.”

“Got it.”

“You have three days to take him out, or else...” Mateo hung up, leaving the threat hanging.

But both Jensen and Calvin understood that if they failed to complete the task, they would face punishment upon their return.

“Alissa, did you catch that?” Calvin shot her a sharp look, his voice laced with ice. “If you don’t want to face consequences, you’d better figure out a way to fix this.”

“I will! Definitely!” Alissa blurted out, nodding quickly.

“You’ve been in Efrery long enough to know the lay of the land. Do you know who holds a grudge against Janice?”

Alissa's eyes sparkled with realization. "I do! That person won't hesitate to team up with us against Janice."

Minnie and Tricia stepped back into the hotel, their minds still buzzing from the night's events.

"Minnie, who would've thought the Mendoza family's party would pay off like that?" Tricia mused, a note of intrigue in her voice. "They betrayed us, but at least we got intel on MO—small victories, I suppose."

Minnie fired off a quick message to Janice before slipping her phone away. "The Mendoza family is useless to us now. The only reason we humored them was because of the properties they handed over. Cutting them off just means less baggage for us—no loss at all."

Tricia arched a brow and leaned in slightly. "So, what's the plan now? We don't need to look for MO anymore, but we can't just head back right after arriving, can we?"

A shadow flickered across Minnie's gaze.

Chapter 888:

"Minnie, don't tell me you're thinking about that guy." Tricia's eyes widened as she caught the subtle shift in Minnie's expression. "Wait a second. Was finding MO just an excuse? You came here for that driver, didn't you?"

"What kind of nonsense is that?" Minnie shot Tricia a half-hearted glare, feigning irritation.

Tricia burst into laughter, her carefree amusement making Minnie roll her eyes.

"What's so amusing?"

"Minnie, don't even try to deny it. I may not have been in a relationship, but I've seen enough to recognize that 100k. You've got a secret crush written all over you."

Tricia's teasing left Minnie with no room to deny it. She sighed. "Fine, I do feel something for Peter, but we've barely spoken. I wouldn't go as far as calling it a crush."

"Nope." Tricia shook her head firmly. "Ever heard of an old saying?"

"What saying?"

"It's that rare, electrifying moment—love at first sight."

Minnie blinked, momentarily stunned. Tricia's words sliced through the haze in her mind like a sudden beam of light.

Love at first sight?

That night when they first met, Peter's eyes had shone like beacons, filling her with an unexpected sense of security in that perilous moment.

But then, an image flickered in her mind—another pair of eyes, eerily familiar, slowly merging with Peter's.

"No, it couldn't be him." Minnie jolted back to reality and shook her head, dismissing the thought.

"Peter works under Master MO, and Aiden is the head of the Green family. There's no way they're the same person."

"Minnie, what are you mumbling about?" Tricia asked, eyeing her curiously. "Did you just mention the head of the Green family? Wait, do you think Peter is related to Aiden?"

"What?" Minnie stared at Tricia, caught off guard. "What makes you say that?"

"Well, they both share the last name Green! There's a chance they could be related."

Minnie fell into deep thought, her gaze turning sharp. “We’re visiting the Green family tomorrow.”

“Minnie, look at you, making the first move for love,” Tricia teased with a chuckle. “I wasn’t planning on going, but for your happiness, I’ll tag along.”

“What are you even saying? I’m just visiting the most powerful family in Efrery, that’s all.” Minnie’s cheeks warmed slightly, but despite her firm words, Tricia’s teasing gaze made her feel a little flustered.

Tricia let out a quiet sigh. Who would’ve thought that Minnie, the family’s pride and hope, had such a soft, girlish side?

No matter the person—man or woman—once love took hold, their rationality seemed to take a nosedive.

As for Tricia, romance had no place in her life. She had no intention of letting men become obstacles on her path to success.

Her future was set—she would join the army and carve out a name for herself, just like her grandfather had.

Stephen’s latest film was officially underway, with shooting in full swing.

Chapter 889:

White Whale Entertainment had poured billions into the project, assembling an elite team of directors and actors.

To Janice, her brother deserved only the finest—anything less simply wasn’t an option.

Right now, Stephen sat in the makeup chair, preparing for his role. He gazed blankly at his reflection in the mirror, still struggling to grasp the reality of his separation from Wendy. It all felt surreal, as if he might wake up at any moment to find it was just a fleeting dream.

“Stephen, this makeup looks stunning on you,” the makeup artist said, stepping back after finishing Stephen’s look. “Your face suits any makeup style perfectly.”

“Thank you,” Stephen offered a faint smile, his charm effortlessly deepening with the simple gesture.

“Stephen, Devin needs you on set. He wants you to get a feel for the scene and go over some details with him.” A crew member approached, relaying the message.

“Got it. I’ll be there in a minute.” Stephen rose to his feet and strode towards the exit.

The moment he stepped outside, a familiar figure emerged from the crowd. A flicker of unease flashed across his face before he could mask it.

“Stephen, you’re looking quite dashing today,” Wendy purred, gliding towards him with a practiced grace. Draped in her signature white gown, she radiated an air of effortless sophistication.

But in her presence, Stephen’s entire body stiffened, frozen in place as though he’d just encountered a phantom from his nightmares.

“What are you doing here?” His voice came out rough, almost strained.

“And why shouldn’t I be?” Wendy countered, lifting a hand to brush his cheek. But before she could, he pulled away, avoiding her touch as though it burned.

“Mrs. Chadwick, I’d appreciate it if you kept your distance.”

A flicker of hurt crossed Wendy’s eyes, but she quickly concealed it behind a forced smile. She reached into her bag and produced a thermos, extending it towards him.

“I made some soup for you. It’s packed with nutrients—good for your health.”

"I don't need your concern." Stephen's jaw tightened, his fists curling ever so slightly.

"Mrs. Chadwick, have you forgotten your own words?"

Wendy's gaze dimmed, his formal address slicing through her like a cold blade, leaving behind a dull ache.

"Stephen, I may have said I'd let you go, but that doesn't mean I can't see you, does it?" Her voice carried a soft melancholy, a sorrow that clung to the air.

"Is there really nothing about me that lingers in your heart?"

"No!" Stephen's teeth clenched as his voice dropped to a grave tone. "The only things you've left me with are fear and hatred."

A fleeting coldness flickered in Wendy's gaze, but she quickly swallowed it down. "No matter how you feel about me, my heart hasn't wavered. You'll always be special to me, Stephen."

"Stephen, Devin's waiting." The crew member returned, a little more impatient this time.

"On my way," Stephen responded, then turned to Wendy with an unwavering gaze. "Mrs. Chadwick, I have a job to do. I'd appreciate it if you didn't interfere."

"The soup..."

Chapter 890:

"You can have it yourself." Without another glance, Stephen pivoted on his heel and walked away.

Wendy's grip tightened around the thermos, her nails pressing into the metal. She might have been bound by her master's orders, but she wasn't out of options. She would find a way—she always did.

Under her breath, she murmured, “You will always be mine, Stephen.”

The opening scene of the film was set against the opulent backdrop of a grand mansion.

In this scene, Stephen was set to clash with the second male lead, all because of the female lead.

The role of the female lead was played by Molly Lawrence, a rising star who had carved her way to fame without any connections—only sheer talent and relentless effort. Devin held her in high regard.

Kyle Hamilton, cast as the second male lead, was a beloved young idol known for his charming, boy-next-door persona.

Kyle hadn’t earned his role through talent but through the strings pulled by his powerful connections. Devin, though hesitant, had no choice but to accommodate him, repaying a favor he owed to Kyle’s influential backer.

“Here, Molly. Have some water.” Kyle approached, extending a bottle of water towards Molly, his smile overly eager, almost desperate.

Without sparing him more than a fleeting, icy glance, Molly continued fixing her makeup. Her voice was flat, dismissive. “I’m not thirsty.”

Kyle’s smile faltered, stiffening as irritation flickered in his eyes. The warmth in his expression turned to ice. “Not in the mood for water? I can get you something else.”

Molly’s hand stilled as she turned to face him, her gaze sharp as a blade. “Kyle, I know exactly what game you’re playing. If you don’t want Devin to find out you’ve been pestering me, I suggest you quit while you’re ahead.”

“Molly, you’re just a nobody from nowhere. What exactly are you so proud of? You’ve only made it this far on sheer luck.” Kyle’s expression darkened as he sneered at Molly. “Luck doesn’t last forever. Who knows? By tomorrow, you might be caught in a scandal and watch your career crumble. But if you play your cards right and stick with me, I can take you to heights you’d never reach on your own.”

Kyle's once-boyish charm contorted into something unsettling, his smirk dripping with arrogance and something far more insidious.

"Kyle, you don't control my fate." Molly's...

Her gaze was unwavering, her voice carrying a quiet strength that rendered his words powerless.

"Fine. One call to Sally, and you're out. Just like that."

Kyle arched a brow, smirking as he leisurely pulled out his phone.

A faint crease formed between Molly's brows, a flicker of unease betraying her otherwise composed demeanor.

Sally Doug was a powerhouse in the industry, with influence that could make or break careers.

Under normal circumstances, the director would never cast someone like Kyle, who coasted on looks rather than talent. But with Sally pulling the strings, even Devin had to bend.

"Feeling nervous?" Kyle's smirk deepened, smugness radiating off him. "I haven't made the call yet. There's still time for you to come to your senses and apologize."

"You're despicable, Kyle!" Molly's fury burned in her eyes. She had clawed her way up, pouring years of blood, sweat, and sacrifice into her career. Landing this role was supposed to be her hard-earned victory.