

Wrath 911

Chapter 911:

That was the confidence behind the words he had spoken to Braylen.

A hefty share of Efrery's elite families danced to Wendy's tune. If he could rally those allies, even Aiden would pause before daring to crush the Chadwick family, wary of stirring a hornet's nest that might throw Efrery into disarray.

"Who are you?"

A man's voice sliced through Roger's thoughts.

He pivoted to find a breathtakingly handsome figure, cloaked in a wistful melancholy, drawing near.

Stephen's gaze swept over the pair, his sharp mind piecing together their identities. Addressing Roger, he ventured, "You're Roger Chadwick, I presume?"

"Stephen? What brings you here?" Daniel's brow creased, bewilderment painting his features. "I've come to visit my mother. Is that an issue?"

Stephen offered no reply. Instead, he drifted towards the window, his eyes locking onto Wendy, who lay still and senseless within the room.

"Daniel, fetch me a bottle of water," Roger demanded.

"Pardon?"

"Now!" Roger's tone thundered, jolting Daniel into motion. The young man scurried off, cowed by his father's iron will.

“Stephen, I’m well aware of the entanglement you once shared with Wendy,” Roger said coldly, his tone laced with hostility. “But now that you’re tethered to Janice, I suggest you steer clear of my wife.”

Stephen’s gaze remained glued to Wendy beyond the glass, as though Roger’s words were mere whispers in the wind.

Roger’s brows knitted together, a storm brewing in his chest. To be brushed aside so casually stung his pride. “You were nothing but my wife’s plaything. Now that she has had her fill and passed you along to Janice, don’t you dare dream of circling back to snare her again. Do you understand?”

“Had her fill? Snare her?” Stephen shook his head, still refusing to meet Roger’s glare. “Truth be told, I’d welcome that notion.”

“What exactly are you implying?” Roger’s face darkened, his eyes boring into Stephen with cold fury. “Are you suggesting my wife is the one clinging to you? Who do you take yourself for? Even with that Best Actor award pinned to your chest, you’re still just an actor, a marionette swaying to the whims of wealth. Don’t flatter yourself into thinking you’re on our level.”

At last, Stephen swiveled to meet Roger’s gaze, his eyes glinting with scorn and derision. “Mr. Chadwick, it appears you’re blissfully ignorant of the woman you call your wife. Perhaps you’re merely another bauble in her collection. Oh, and one more thing, Wendy once let slip a little tidbit about you. She called you a hollow shell of a man, utterly incapable of satisfying her.”

“What did you just call me?” Roger’s pupils shrank to pinpricks, his face contorting with fury. Stephen’s words had pierced the heart of his masculine pride like a dagger.

He clenched his fist, rearing back to strike Stephen.

Yet, beneath Stephen’s refined, almost fragile exterior, lurked a ferocity that surfaced when provoked.

Before Roger’s blow could find its mark, Stephen’s fist crashed into Roger’s jaw with startling precision.

Roger crumpled to the floor with a groan, staring up at Stephen in stunned disbelief.

"I harbor nothing but loathing for Wendy, so don't let your imagination run wild," Stephen hissed through clenched teeth. "I came here solely to see if the grave has claimed her yet. For the sins she has wrought upon me, no penance in this lifetime could suffice. I'll see to it that she spends her remaining days steeped in remorse, withering alone in despair."

Chapter 912:

Roger gaped at Stephen, thunderstruck. The raw hatred blazing in Stephen's eyes left no room for skepticism—it was a fire that consumed all doubt.

He had always pegged Stephen as Wendy's pampered paramour, but never had he fathomed the depths of Stephen's resentment towards her.

Roger's expression flickered with a tangle of emotions as he regarded Stephen. "I once thought Wendy was unhinged, but it seems you've outdone her in lunacy. You profess to despise her, yet you balk at her death. If that's not madness, pray tell, what is?"

Stephen's lips twisted into a mirthless chuckle, his gaze drifting back to Wendy beyond the glass.

Perhaps he had indeed lost his grip on sanity.

When he had witnessed Wendy throw herself in front of a bullet meant for him, a tempest of feelings had erupted within—hatred, astonishment, and, against all reason, a fleeting reluctance to watch her perish.

Yes, he must be deranged to feel even a whisper of hesitation over this fiend's demise.

Or perhaps, deep down, he simply couldn't stomach the thought of her slipping away so easily.

"Dad, what happened to your face? Are you okay?" Daniel inquired, his confusion palpable as he returned with a glass of water and noticed the bruise marking Roger's face.

“Let’s go back,” Roger stated curtly.

“Dad, aren’t we going to see Mom?”

Ignoring the question, Roger turned and exited Auburn Hospital.

At the hospital’s window, Stephen retrieved his phone and dialed Leah. “Ms. Sugden, I need your assistance. Could you locate Kyle?”

Leah, upon receiving the message, quickly passed the information to Janice.

After a moment’s consideration, Janice instructed, “Have Costello track him, but keep our distance. Stephen needs an outlet right now.”

“Understood.”

Post-call, Janice massaged her temples, the weight of the day pressing down on her.

Out of nowhere, a large hand enveloped her smaller one. Turning, she met a gaze so intense that it warmed her to the core.

The silent smile Aiden offered filled her with a deep sense of belonging, alleviating the isolation she’d felt for too long.

Janice had overcome countless obstacles since she founded JE Consortium from the ground up.

Though hailed as a visionary for propelling the consortium to new heights, only Janice was privy to the true extent of her struggles. Her hardships were incomprehensible even to Leah and the rest of her team.

Now facing the Welch family, it seemed as though she was back at the consortium's inception, navigating fresh challenges.

This time, however, Aiden stood by her, his presence a source of comfort, piercing her solitude.

"Aiden, are you nervous?" Janice teased. "You're about to meet Cloverhill's most prestigious and sought-after woman. Minnie's quite the catch, isn't she?"

"Janice, that upsets me," Aiden responded gravely. "You are the only woman in my eyes."

Chapter 913:

Clearing her throat, Janice was taken aback by his sincerity. "I was merely trying to ease the tension."

Aiden leaned in close, his eyes locking onto hers. "I don't appreciate that joke. It seems you need a reminder."

"What?"

Before she could utter another word, Aiden's lips claimed hers in a fierce kiss that seemed to weave their souls together.

From the driver's seat, Braylen glimpsed the intense moment in his rearview mirror, his expression one of amused disbelief.

Aiden, who had once been stoic and distant, was now a charismatic master of romance.

As the mood in the car shifted toward intimacy, Braylen discreetly selected a soft, romantic tune.

Gasping slightly from the intensity of their kiss, Janice's competitive spirit surged. She reversed their roles, pushing Aiden back into his seat to kiss him more assertively.

Aiden's eyebrow arched in delight as he realized Janice had truly accepted him. All that was left was finding the perfect moment to confess his feelings and solidify their bond.

Once the conflict with the Welch family was resolved, he would declare his love publicly.

Filled with anticipation to bring down the Welch family with all his resources, Aiden was eager to claim Janice as his own before the world.

After a while, their fervent moment was interrupted by Braylen clearing his throat. "Uh, we've arrived."

Aiden looked out the window, noting they had reached the Green family's estate, and gave Braylen a glance that conveyed the untimeliness of his interruption.

With a rueful smile, Braylen admitted to himself that he had taken several detours to prolong their journey. However, as the night deepened, he didn't want to delay their arrival any longer with the family waiting.

"Aiden, let's go inside. I'm eager to meet Minnie formally," said Janice.

"Alright."

Stepping out of the car, Aiden began to walk towards the mansion.

Suddenly, a hand clasped his, stopping him in his tracks.

Turning, Aiden found Janice's eyes twinkling playfully at him.

Wordlessly, they entered the estate hand in hand.

The Green family's chef had outdone himself, preparing a lavish array of regional specialties, each more enticing than the last.

"Where is Aiden? He should have returned by now." Nina checked the time and frowned. "Doesn't he realize we have guests today?"

"It's okay," Minnie reassured her.

With a gentle smile, Minnie replied, "He's likely tied up with work. It's understandable if he's running late."

"You're very considerate, Minnie." Nina sighed appreciatively. "If I had another son, I would surely pair you up. But unfortunately, I have only Aiden, and he's chosen Janice."

Sierra and Nellie exchanged knowing looks. Her words not only praised Minnie but also subtly reminded her of Aiden and Janice's relationship.

Chapter 914:

Minnie remained composed, her expression softening into a gentle smile. "It would be a tremendous honor to be part of your family, Nina. However, I believe in destiny. The future holds many uncertainties, and until the final moment, certainty eludes us all, wouldn't you agree?"

Nina returned the smile, though a sense of disquiet took hold within her. She pondered the implications of Minnie's words. Was Minnie suggesting that she and Aiden were destined for each other? Despite Janice and Aiden's current happiness, could that not ensure their future joy?

"Minnie, is it time for dinner yet?" Tricia asked, her attention fixed on the table laden with food, her hunger evident by her growling stomach.

Minnie gave her a sharp look. "If you're hungry, have some water. We are guests here, and we must wait for the hosts to begin before we eat. That's the proper etiquette."

Tricia sighed heavily and drank a large sip of water, which only made her feel even hungrier.

“Aiden and Janice are here,” Alcott called out from his seat outside as he noticed the couple approaching the estate hand in hand.

All eyes turned simultaneously to observe the pair showing great affection as they walked together.

Nina’s face brightened with joy at the sight, silently commending Aiden with a smile. Given his rapid closeness with Janice, she was hopeful that it might not be long before Aiden and Janice would remarry.

“Sorry for being late. The office kept me.” Aiden apologized as he walked in, acknowledging the group. Yet, he avoided looking at Minnie.

“Aiden, we have visitors today. Regardless of how busy you are, manners are important,” Nina said gently, her voice more playful than harsh. “This is Minnie Payne.”

“Miss Payne, a pleasure to see you again,” Aiden said, his expression respectful yet neutral, revealing neither warmth nor distance. Minnie rose to meet his gaze firmly. “Mr. Green, I trust my unexpected visit isn’t too much of a bother.”

“Absolutely not,” Aiden responded with a smile, though his voice carried a trace of reserve.

“Let’s go ahead and begin dinner. We shouldn’t keep our guests waiting any longer.”

He then carefully pulled out a chair for Janice, ensuring she was comfortably seated before taking his own place next to her.

Minnie observed their interactions, feeling a twinge of jealousy. However, from their brief exchange and her observations throughout the day, she was convinced of one thing—Aiden was Peter.

The dinner ambiance was vibrant. The conversation flowed smoothly, and Minnie conducted herself elegantly, eating modestly. Tricia, in contrast, enthusiastically enjoyed the meal, complimenting each dish. Nina, delighted by her vigor, even asked the chef to prepare some specialty dishes for Tricia to take home.

“Thank you for the wonderful dinner, Nina,” Minnie expressed her gratitude after some time had passed, then stood to leave. “It’s getting late, and Tricia and I must be returning home. I hope to come again soon.”

“You are always welcome here, Minnie. Just inform me beforehand, and I will ensure everything is prepared for your visit,” Nina responded warmly.

Minnie gave a slight smile before addressing Janice and Aiden. “Should you find yourselves in Cloverhill, I would be honored to host you.”

“Of course,” Janice answered with a nod, her eyes briefly flashing with intensity.

Chapter 915:

With their farewells said, Minnie and Tricia departed.

As they drove off, Janice’s face took on a somber tone. “Minnie certainly stands out.”

“What do you mean by that?” Aiden asked, looking over at her.

“I believe she has realized that I am MO,” Janice said plainly.

“What?” Aiden reacted with surprise, his eyes widening. “How could she have guessed that? We behaved so normally just now!”

Janice gave him a sidelong look, her voice tinged with resignation. “It’s because of you.”

“Me?” Aiden pointed at himself, clearly confused.

“You wouldn’t get it,” Janice said with a shrug, choosing not to explain further. She then turned and walked away.

“Hey, Janice, could you at least clarify?” Aiden shouted after her, his expression one of annoyance. He was desperate for an explanation.

Inside the car, Minnie remained quiet, her expression reflecting a storm of emotions.

“Minnie, what’s on your mind?” Tricia asked, looking at her with curiosity.

“I hadn’t anticipated that MO would be so young and attractive,” Minnie said thoughtfully.

“What? MO?” Tricia was taken aback. “You mean MO was there just now?”

Minnie nodded and explained, “MO is Janice. It’s really remarkable. She’s not just MO, but also JE. When she comes to Cloverhill, she has the potential to turn the whole city upside down.”

“How did you figure all this out?” Tricia gazed at Minnie, her eyes wide, struck by the sharp contrast in their perceptiveness.

Minnie remained silent, instead reflecting on the way Aiden had looked at Janice. It was the exact same manner Peter had looked at MO.

In a dimly lit room of the luxurious Crown Hotel, Molly lay in bed, her body barely concealed by the thin fabric, vulnerability clinging to her like a second skin.

Kyle lounged on the sofa across from her, idly swirling the wine in his glass. A slow, unreadable smirk tugged at his lips, but his eyes gleamed with something unsettling.

“Well, well, weren’t you always so virtuous? And now, here you are, ready for me to do as I please.” He took a slow sip of wine, the rich liquid igniting something predatory in his gaze.

Just then, Molly’s lashes quivered before her eyes blinked open, hazy with confusion.

“Where am I?”

Her fingers pressed against her temple as she struggled to remember. She had been out with friends, laughing over barbecue, the night carefree—until that last sip of her iced drink. Then, everything had gone dark.

“Finally awake?”

A voice she recognized shattered the silence.

Molly’s breath hitched as her gaze snapped to Kyle. A chill ran down her spine.

“Kyle? What are you doing here? Where am I?”

Kyle chuckled darkly, pushing off the sofa. His robe hung carelessly from his shoulders, his presence thick with menace.

Chapter 916:

“You still don’t get it? Tonight, you’re mine.”

Molly’s complexion drained of color as a chilling truth sank in—she had been deceived by the very person she trusted most. The bottle of iced drink that led to her downfall had come from none other than Sylvie Singh, her so-called best friend.

“No, this can’t be. Sylvie would never betray me.”

Molly’s voice cracked, her heart pounding. Anger and hurt warred within her, threatening to consume her.

Kyle tossed back the last of his wine, his tongue flicking over his lips in satisfaction.

“Everyone has a price, sweetheart. A hundred grand, and your dear friend sold you out. I figured it’d take at least two hundred, but a mere hundred thousand, and she sold you out without a second thought. Guess you weren’t worth much to her after all.”

“You’re a monster!” Molly spat, her fists clenching.

Kyle arched a brow, amusement flickering in his gaze.

“Monster? Oh, sweetheart, you haven’t seen anything yet.”

In a swift motion, he closed the gap, his hands pressing her down against the mattress.

Molly thrashed, her nails raking across his chest in desperation. A sharp hiss escaped him as red welts bloomed across his skin.

Kyle’s expression darkened. With a loud crack, his hand struck her cheek, sending a sharp sting through her skin. A metallic tang filled her mouth.

Pain seared through her, momentarily stilling her movements. Her body instinctively froze.

“Kyle, please don’t do this.”

Her voice trembled, tears spilling over her lashes, but her plea only seemed to stoke the fire in his eyes.

“I prefer you like this,” Kyle murmured with a sinister chuckle. “You always pretend to be pure and untouchable. But tonight, I’ll make you my plaything.”

“No! Stop! Please!”

Kyle lurched forward, his breath hot and reeking of alcohol as he tried to crush his lips against hers.

Molly's heart plummeted into an abyss of despair. She thrashed weakly, but her resistance felt futile.

The dream she had nurtured since childhood—becoming an actress—felt like a cruel, unattainable fantasy now.

The industry she had once idealized was nothing more than a cesspool, where bodies were traded for fame and morality was sacrificed for profit.

Even with all its filth, she had clung to her principles, convinced that if she held on to her dignity, she'd find a way to survive the darkness. But now, the cold hands of reality were yanking her straight into the abyss.

Suddenly, the door flew open with a thunderous bang.

Kyle flinched, whipping around with a scowl.

"Who the hell..."

But the moment he saw who it was, the color drained from his face. His words stalled in his throat.

"Stephen? What are you doing here?"

Chapter 917:

Stephen stood in the doorway, his expression dark and unreadable. His sharp gaze pinned Kyle in place.

If not for Kyle's nonsense, Wendy wouldn't have had to take that bullet. Kyle had this coming.

"Stephen!"

Molly shoved Kyle away and stumbled toward Stephen, desperate for safety.

Stephen didn't even glance at her. His focus was locked onto Kyle, his eyes sharp as blades, making Kyle shift uncomfortably.

"Stephen, I don't think I've done anything to upset you, right?" Kyle forced out a shaky grin. "Molly and I were just acting out a scene."

"Liar!" Molly hissed, her voice...

Quivering with rage, Molly shouted, "You drugged me, dragged me here, and tried to force yourself on me!"

"Shut the hell up, you little wench!" Kyle snapped, then turned to Stephen, his voice softening with forced friendliness. "Come on, Stephen. No need to ruin our relationship over a woman. Let's not make this messy, yeah? Besides, Sally and Mrs. Chadwick are close. For Sally's sake, let's just forget this ever happened..."

Stephen didn't let him finish.

In a flash, he closed the gap and drove a brutal punch straight into Kyle's face.

Stephen was never one to lose his temper, let alone throw a punch. But tonight, his fury had reached its boiling point, and Kyle was about to feel every bit of it.

"Ah!" Kyle howled as the force of the punch sent him crashing to the floor.

Stephen was far from done. His rage surged like an unchained beast, a violent tempest demanding he tear the worthless piece of trash before him to shreds.

He pinned Kyle beneath him, his fists crashing down in a merciless rhythm. Blood sprayed with each brutal hit, flecking Stephen's face, but he neither flinched nor slowed.

Wendy stood rooted to the spot, her breath caught in her throat, eyes stretched wide with disbelief.

The man she had always known—the polished, charismatic actor with an air of effortless elegance—was gone. In his place was a man possessed by fury, a predator unchained, terrifying in his raw, unfiltered aggression.

Kyle's face had turned into a grotesque ruin, a canvas of torn flesh and dripping crimson.

His body had surrendered to the pain, unconsciousness swallowing him whole as he hovered on the edge of oblivion.

But Stephen's fists refused to stop, moving with a mind of their own—mechanical, relentless, fueled by an insatiable need to pummel Kyle into nothingness.

"Stephen, stop!"

A sharp voice sliced through the haze of violence, freezing Stephen's clenched fist in mid-air.

"He's going to die," Molly reminded him, her voice unsteady. "No matter how much he deserves it, he's not worth ruining your own life over."

Stephen's dazed eyes slowly refocused. He stared at his own blood-smeared hands and let out a hollow, bitter chuckle.

"So, I have this kind of cruelty in me too," he murmured, his voice edged with exhaustion and something far worse—self-loathing. "I'm no different from her."

Chapter 918:

Somewhere in the chaos, buried beneath the fury, he had felt something twisted—satisfaction.

Was this what Wendy had felt when she tortured him?

Stephen exhaled a long, weary sigh as he pushed himself to his feet. His voice was quiet but firm.

“Leave. And don’t speak a word of this to anyone.”

“Are you alright?”

Wendy took a tentative step forward, worry creasing her brow. She wanted to reach for him, to offer something—comfort, understanding—but he seemed lost in a sorrow too deep to touch.

“Get out!”

Stephen’s voice cracked like a whip, sharp and unyielding. His eyes burned as he shot her a glare that brooked no argument.

Molly recoiled, her pulse hammering in terror. For a second, she hesitated, then, with a sharp breath, she turned and bolted.

Stephen’s gaze dropped to Kyle, who lay motionless on the floor. Without medical help, he wouldn’t see morning.

Just then, Costello stepped out from the shadows.

“Leave this to me.”

Stephen’s gaze shifted to Costello, and for the first time that night, a glimmer of relief softened his tense features.

A realization settled over him—he wasn’t alone. No matter what, his sister was always there, watching over him from the shadows.

“I appreciate it.”

“You’re Janice’s brother. I’ll make sure this disappears without a trace,” Costello assured him, his massive frame radiating an authority that even Stephen couldn’t match.

“You’re going to kill him?”

Costello paused, his sharp gaze assessing Stephen.

“Is that what you want?”

Stephen’s jaw clenched, emotions warring on his face before he let out a slow breath.

“I won’t lie—I want him dead. But that doesn’t mean I should become a murderer.”

Costello gave a curt nod.

“Understood. Leave it to me.”

Without another word, he stepped forward, ready to clean up the mess.

As Stephen settled into Costello’s car, a strange realization struck him—Kyle’s fate was a mystery. It was as if the entire nightmare had been erased, leaving no trace behind.

“Kyle...?”

Stephen’s voice was hesitant, uncertain.

“They took him to the hospital,” Costello said flatly, his tone void of any concern.

The blunt response made Stephen exhale, the tension in his shoulders easing just slightly.

“But when he wakes up, tonight will be nothing but a blank slate,” Costello added, his voice even.

Chapter 919:

Stephen’s head snapped towards Costello, surprise flickering in his eyes.

“How?”

Costello offered no explanation. Instead, his voice remained steady.

“You need rest. Leave the rest to me.”

Stephen parted his lips, then hesitated, thinking better of it. Finally, he sighed, surrendering to the weight of exhaustion. His eyes fluttered shut, and sleep claimed him.

Costello’s gaze flicked to the rearview mirror, watching until Stephen’s breathing evened out. Satisfied, he pulled out his phone and dialed Janice. He summarized the night’s events in a few curt sentences.

“I appreciate it, Costello.”

“About Stephen’s feelings for Wendy...”

Janice’s voice came through unwavering on the receiver. “It doesn’t matter. Whatever choice he makes, I’ll stand by him.”

“Got it.”

Janice ended the call, a deep frown settling on her face. The man beside her caught the shift in her expression and couldn't mask his concern.

"Is your brother okay?" Aiden offered her a glass of water, his voice laced with worry.

"Thanks." Janice took the glass, sipping absently. "Stephen's relationship with Wendy is more tangled than I realized. Maybe their years of interaction have left a mark on him, making his subconscious believe this was the most normal way for him to interact with her."

Aiden stiffened, his mind spinning. Had Wendy conditioned Stephen into some twisted dependency? Could her constant abuse have warped his perception, making him crave the very pain he despised? Despite Stephen's hatred for Wendy, maybe the years of torment had rewired his instincts, forcing him into an unconscious acceptance of her control.

"Should I set up a session with a psychologist?" Aiden suggested.

Janice shook her head. "Let's wait and see what Stephen wants. I don't want to push him into anything. Stephen has spent his entire life shackled by expectations. As his sister, the least I can do is let him choose his own path."

"Understood." Aiden nodded, gently cradling Janice's hand. The warmth from his broad palm enveloped hers, offering reassurance.

Back at the Welch family estate, Jensen, Calvin, and Alissa hurried to Mateo's study, where Gilmore and Mateo were already assembled. Alissa knelt on the floor, her head bowed, her body quivering under the weight of the tense atmosphere in the room.

"Should we continue after this failed assassination attempt?" Calvin asked, his brow furrowed with concern.

Gilmore dismissed the question with a wave of his hand, his voice detached. "There's no chance left after this blunder. I've just heard that the Dark Web has broadcasted a message from Queen, the top hacker. She's declared anyone attempting to harm Stephen as her enemy."

“Why would Queen issue such a warning? Is Stephen her ally?” Calvin blurted out, his voice tinged with disbelief.

Gilmore looked at Calvin, a cold smile curling his lips. “Don’t you see? Queen is part of JE’s team.”

Chapter 920:

A chill ran down Calvin’s spine as he grasped why his father and uncle were so cautious around JE. This woman likely wielded more power than they had anticipated. A figure like Queen could easily destabilize a publicly traded company. It was rumored that once, an attack involving a hundred hackers targeted the JE Consortium’s servers. By the next morning, the hacker group had been decimated, their systems destroyed. And Queen was the orchestrator of that downfall.

Since then, she had topped the leaderboard, commanding the respect of countless hackers.

“So, are we to just watch Stephen live freely? And they’re likely to retaliate,” Calvin expressed his concern.

“In my view, they’re mere jesters. They could never overthrow our family,” Gilmore scoffed. “Our plan is to leverage our influence to corner the Green family and their allies. Once they feel the full force of our might, they will fold easily. And once we uncover Stephen’s vulnerability, we can dictate his fate effortlessly.”

Calvin’s eyes sparkled with renewed confidence, buoyed by the thought of the Welch family’s dominance. In the face of their overwhelming power, all plots seemed trivial.

“By the way, Mateo, what’s the latest on Dad?” Gilmore suddenly turned to Mateo.

Mateo massaged his temples, his voice deep and heavy with implication. “Since Dad woke up, he’s refused to see anyone. He claims he’s old and wants to retire peacefully, away from the burdens of leadership.”

His eyes flashed fiercely as he slammed his hand on the table. “That old fool divided the Welch family’s power into four. If I’d known, I would never have let him regain consciousness. Even if his death led to

chaos within our ranks, it would be preferable to this helplessness.” The three elders who now held significant power had declared their autonomy, disregarding his role as the family head.

Consequently, the Welch family was now fragmented into four competing factions, each stealthily plotting to usurp complete control.

“Dad, I have an idea,” Alissa ventured, breaking her prolonged silence. All eyes snapped to her, their intense scrutiny making her squirm.

“What idea?” Mateo’s voice was icy. “If it’s sound, I might overlook your earlier disgrace and the loss of our house.”

“If we can incite a conflict between those three and the Payne family, we might exploit the ensuing turmoil,” Alissa suggested tentatively, lifting her gaze.

“Alissa, are you really that naive?” Mateo slammed his fist down again. “The influence they wield is ours. If they fall, it reflects our loss. Your plan is self-destructive.”

“I’m sorry, Dad. I didn’t consider that,” Alissa stammered, her body shaking with fear.

“Humph, you’re utterly worthless,” Mateo scoffed, his cold gaze making her feel less than a servant.

Calvin and Jensen remained silent, not treating Alissa as their sister. Feeling the piercing coldness of their stares, Alissa’s heart ached, yet she remained powerless.

“It’s not entirely without merit,” Gilmore interjected. “While Alissa’s plan risks short-term loss, it could strategically benefit us in the long term.”

“Gilmore, are you serious?” Mateo looked skeptically at his younger brother.

“Mateo, haven’t your two sons accomplished much lately?” Gilmore replied, glancing towards Jensen and Calvin. “Their independent venture is shaping up well. With the family’s backing, they could soon lead their industry.”