

Wrath 921

Chapter 921:

Calvin's face lit up, thrilled by his uncle's words. With the Welch family's support, his business, Weely Group, was set to soar. He envisioned becoming a celebrated figure, surpassing his ancestors and redefining the Welch legacy.

"You have a point, Gilmore. My sons are capable. But how does this relate to causing friction between the three elders and the Payne family?" Mateo asked.

"The old timers aren't as sharp as they once were. Imagine if we nudged them to support Calvin and Jensen in a rivalry with the Payne family," Gilmore suggested.

Mateo thought for a moment, then his expression brightened, and he slapped the table. "I see. The Welch and Payne families have been in deadlock for years. If my sons can outdo the Payne family, it would certainly capture the elders' interest. They've been loyal since Dad's days, through thick and thin against the Payne family. They'd relish seeing them defeated. With their backing, we could slowly shift control from their hands to ours."

Mateo implied that the feud with the Payne family was just a front. The true aim was to reclaim the three elders' power.

Mateo clenched his fist, his eyes burning with resolve. Calvin and Jensen also caught on, their faces showing eager anticipation.

"However, we're not sure how to start," Calvin said, his brow furrowed. "Without a clear strategy, convincing the old timers could be challenging."

"That's easy," Gilmore sneered. "The Payne family is eyeing a development project in Hillford. We usually wouldn't interfere, but this time, it's our way in."

Calvin raised an eyebrow. Typically, the Welch family steered clear of the Payne family's territory. Now, to intentionally provoke conflict, they needed to make a bold move.

"Calvin, Jensen, you'll handle this. Your father and I need to stay out of the spotlight," Gilmore instructed, looking at the two young men.

"Yes, Uncle."

"Also, the pawn we got out of prison needs to start playing his role," Gilmore added, his eyes narrowing. "Since we can't get rid of that illegitimate child directly, we'll just have to chip away at him gradually."

"Understood."

At Auburn Hospital, Wendy was stable after a day of observation and had been transferred to a VIP ward. The uncertainty of when she might regain consciousness lingered—it could be tomorrow, or it might take years.

Early the next morning, Stephen arrived at the ward and sat quietly beside Wendy. His gaze was fixed on her, his face unreadable. Shortly afterward, Janice walked in with breakfast for Stephen. Seeing him lost in thought, she couldn't help but sigh.

"Janice, is your brother okay?" Aiden asked, his brow creased with worry as he observed Stephen.

"The intricacies of love are beyond me, so I don't really know what advice I could give him," Janice responded with a soft sigh. "He needs to find his own path now."

"It's ironic," Aiden said, his voice laden with emotion, his hands buried in his pockets. "Your brother has been tortured by Wendy for so many years; one would expect only resentment. Yet, it seems there's more to their relationship."

Janice turned sharply to Aiden. "Aiden, have you been reading too many romance novels?"

"Actually, I have," Aiden said with a raised eyebrow. Eager to demonstrate that his readings weren't for naught, he launched into an animated explanation. "In one story, the heroine is trapped by the hero and endures all sorts of abuse. However, as their intense relationship unfolds, something unexpected

develops between them. At first, she despises him, but when her life is on the line, she discovers the truth of her emotions. With this realization, she begins to change, growing a bit possessive. She and the hero..."

Chapter 922:

"Enough!" Janice quickly clamped her hand over Aiden's mouth, worried he might continue with inappropriate analogies.

Yet, Aiden's comparisons weren't far off from Stephen and Wendy's dynamic. Could it be, as Aiden suggested, that their adversarial relationship had evolved into something more affectionate?

"Aiden, maybe you should cut back on those novels. I wouldn't want you to start thinking too strangely."

Aiden held Janice's hand with a warm smile. "I've had Braylen dispose of all those novels. After all, I have you now."

"I haven't agreed to anything yet." Janice shot him a playful glance, moving towards the ward with breakfast.

Aiden's eyes followed her, a soft smile gracing his lips as he mused, "You may not have said yes, but deep down, you've already agreed, haven't you?"

"Stephen, I brought you some breakfast," Janice announced cheerfully.

"Thank you, Janice," Stephen replied, his expression brightening as he emerged from his reverie.

Janice's expression softened at the sight of him looking so worn and defeated. "Wendy's past the critical phase now. As long as she gets proper rest, she'll recover. Try not to worry too much."

As for when Wendy would wake up, Janice was uncertain about that. Stephen shook his head, his tone laden with worry. "I'm just afraid she'll pass before I can repay the suffering I've endured."

“Do you really only feel hatred towards Wendy?” Janice couldn’t help but ask, her brow furrowed in concern.

Caught off guard, Stephen’s eyes flickered with confusion, but he quickly regained his composure. “Yes, nothing but hatred. She was cruel to me in the past, subjecting me to endless humiliation. I need to ensure she faces the consequences of her actions. Therefore, she must not die. She needs to witness my success on stage and live long enough to regret her deeds.”

Janice’s frown deepened. Despite Stephen’s bitter words, she detected a deeper, unresolved sentiment.

He envisioned a future where he’d dazzle everyone with his talents, with Wendy watching regretfully from afar. Was this not a tragically entwined destiny?

Conflicted, Janice massaged her temples, pondering the true depth of Stephen’s feelings. Her own disdain for Wendy had been fueled by Stephen’s suffering, but if Stephen had feelings for Wendy, what was the point of her hatred?

“Let’s start with breakfast,” Aiden interjected, breaking the tension as he set the table and distributed the meals. “Stephen, Janice made this herself. Try some.”

Motivated by Janice’s effort, Stephen, despite his lack of appetite, began to eat.

“This smells wonderful!” At that moment, an elderly voice came from outside.

Startled, Janice turned to see an elderly man with a kind smile, leaning on a cane. “Mr. Welch?”

Orson motioned for silence as he entered the room. He signaled his assistant to guard the door, ensuring their conversation would not be disturbed.

“Mr. Welch?” Stephen exclaimed, rising abruptly, his gaze hardened with resentment towards Orson. “Are you the head of the Welch family?”

“Stephen, please, calm down,” Janice urged, her frown deepening as she restrained him. She could feel the tremor of rage through his clenched hand.

“Janice, how can I calm down when the man responsible for our family’s ruin is right here?” Stephen seethed, his teeth gritted. “This is the head of the Welch family. I want to tear him apart.”

Chapter 923:

“I understand your anger and even your hatred,” Orson sighed. “I won’t ask you to stop hating. In fact, I wish you could dismantle the Welch family.”

“What?” Stephen gasped, taken aback by Orson’s unexpected admission. “You want us to bring down the Welch family?”

“Yes,” Orson confirmed with a weary smile. “Like you, I have deep-seated grievances against the Welch family. I built this empire out of love for someone dear to me, enduring disgrace in the process. Yet, they showed no loyalty or justice, crushing my aspirations. If I were still young, I might try to destroy them myself. But now, I’m too old to undertake such a task.”

As Orson spoke, Stephen’s anger subsided, and he could sense the genuine hatred in the old man’s words.

“Janice, did you know about this?” He turned abruptly to Janice. Given that Janice had remained composed and even advised calmness upon Orson’s arrival, it suggested she might have been privy to more than she let on.

“Stephen, actually, he’s our grandfather.”

“What?” Stephen’s eyes widened in shock, staring at Orson. “Grandpa? How is that possible?”

“I know it seems unbelievable, but it’s true,” Orson explained wearily, repeating the story he had shared with Janice earlier.

Understanding dawned on Stephen, and he sank back into his chair. "So that's it. No wonder you seemed so affected when you met my mother years ago."

He had been young then, but he remembered vividly his mother's joy and excitement after meeting Orson.

Yet, shortly after Orson left, the Welch family committed heinous acts against them, leading to the White family's overnight downfall. Such a stark contrast made him forget Orson had ever visited the White family.

"Mr. Welch, are you here to see me and my brother?" Janice asked, her face reflecting mixed emotions.

Orson nodded slowly, but his attention soon shifted to Wendy, who was lying in the hospital bed. His eyes betrayed a sense of resignation and bitterness. "I'm here for her as well."

"Wendy?" Janice looked towards Wendy, and then a realization hit her. "Earlier, Wendy stopped her assault on me, claiming someone she referred to as 'Master' had ordered her to. Was that person you?"

"Yes," Orson confirmed with a nod. "I am the 'Master' she mentioned." This disclosure left everyone present in shock. They were astounded by Orson's profound control over Wendy, who seemed otherwise uncontrollable.

"I recognize there have been severe conflicts between you and Wendy, and that is my responsibility." Orson sighed, his tone filled with regret. "It was my actions that shaped her into who she is now."

Stephen looked up at Orson, his voice shaking. "Can you tell me her story? I need to understand how she turned into the person she is."

Orson locked eyes with Stephen and nodded. "I've come here today to tell you everything. If, after learning about Wendy's past, you still find her actions unforgivable, then I will have her take her own life right before you. She will not defy me. Because she remains bound to me as my slave."

Stephen felt the sting of those words as if they were a dagger piercing his heart, bringing to the surface memories he had long tried to forget. Wendy had once spoken those very same words to him. "Stephen, you will always be my slave."

Stephen clenched his fists, his look toward Orson growing colder and more intense.

Chapter 924:

Orson appeared unaffected by the tension. He sat down, exhaling tiredly. "I'm not as robust as I once was. Standing for even short periods wears me out."

He paused, then shifted his focus back to Wendy and began to speak slowly. "I found Wendy when she was an orphan. Our paths crossed years ago over a drumstick. She had lost her parents and was surviving on the streets, enduring days without food. One day, having not eaten for three days, she saw me eating in the street. Driven by desperation, she ran up, snatched a drumstick, and tried to flee. My assistant, Brad Mason, was quick to catch her. Back then, Wendy was as thin as a sparrow, fragile, yet her eyes shone with fierce determination. That's when I decided to take her in as my adopted daughter."

Though Wendy became Orson's adopted daughter, she experienced no fatherly warmth. Instead, she was subjected to harsh, unrelenting training. Orson intended to shape her into a covert weapon, a tool to eliminate any barriers in his path.

Wendy's days transformed from scavenging in the streets to enduring demanding training routines. To secure her meals, she stretched herself to her limits, silently bearing the harsh discipline from her trainers. She understood that excelling was her only way to avoid hunger.

At this point, Orson paused, clearly fatigued by the lengthy explanation. Janice, always thoughtful, quickly poured him a glass of water and handed it to him.

"Thank you," Orson said, accepting the glass. His expression softened as he looked at her. "You remind me so much of your mother—always so kind."

A brief shadow of sadness passed over Orson's face but vanished almost immediately.

“Yes. She was the gentlest person.” Stephen was stirred by Orson’s words, his mind drifting to memories of his mother. Though her face had grown blurry in his mind, the warmth she exuded remained vivid. Orson looked at Stephen and Janice, his face a canvas of pain and regret. If only he hadn’t gone looking for his daughter back then, perhaps the White family’s tragedy could have been averted. But the past was unchangeable.

“I was a child starved for affection,” Orson resumed with a heavy sigh. “Her acceptance of the grueling training and her tolerance for suffering were driven by a desire for my approval, for me to recognize her.”

“Recognize her as what?” Stephen interjected.

“To accept her as my real daughter,” Orson replied, taking a deep breath, his eyes filled with a complex mix of remorse and helplessness as he gazed toward Wendy. “But at that time, I only saw her as a tool, or even worse, a slave.”

Hearing this, Stephen felt a deep sting in his heart. Perhaps no one else could truly understand Wendy’s feelings, but he could. The journey Wendy had taken was one Stephen was all too familiar with. The only difference was that her pain had been far greater than his own.

Orson settled beside Wendy, his fragile hand trembling as it brushed tenderly through her hair. His misty eyes shimmered with a bittersweet blend of remorse and affection.

“With the wisdom of years comes a sharper understanding of life’s deeper truths,” he murmured, his voice thick with sorrow. “Wendy has always looked to me as a father, yearning for my approval. In her eyes, even the torment and suffering she endured became twisted into a strange proof of love.”

Stephen’s face blanched at these words, as though a veil had been lifted, revealing a truth his heart shrank from embracing.

“Stephen, I can’t fathom the depths of pain Wendy may have caused you, but never forget—she was the one who pulled you from the jaws of death all those years ago.” Orson sighed, turning to Stephen. “My three wretched sons, driven by greed, wrought unspeakable horrors upon the White family. By the time I saw the wreckage they had made, it was too late to stop it. Thankfully, Wendy arrived in time to save

you and has protected you since then. If you can find it in your heart to give her a chance, I'll honor any wish you name."

Chapter 925:

This was the burden of gratitude Orson carried for Wendy—a debt too late to repay in full, perhaps, now that he was merely a weary old man with little left to offer.

Stephen crumpled to the floor, hands clutching his head as waves of anguish shuddered through him. Orson's revelation had turned his world upside down, shattering every belief he had clung to. Could it be true? All those scars, the sting of Wendy's actions—were they, in some warped way, her attempts at love?

Raised in a crucible of dysfunction, had she come to see pain as the only language of affection?

Stephen's mind spiraled through memories of their time together. The moments of fiery passion always seemed to bloom amid the deepest wounds Wendy left behind. And yet, though Wendy had sent him into the company of other affluent women, she had never let their hands truly claim him.

Whenever intimacy loomed, those women would inexplicably slip into unconsciousness, leaving only a hollow mirage of intimacy in their wake.

Across the span of all those years, Wendy alone had been the one to truly share in his intimacy.

"Stephen..." Janice could feel the weight of his suffering, and a flicker of concern tightened her chest.

"Janice, I'm sorry," Stephen rasped, his voice raw as he curled in on himself. "Could you give me a moment alone?"

"Of course," Janice replied without hesitation. She slipped quietly from the hospital room with Aiden and Orson, leaving Stephen in the stillness.

When the door clicked shut, Stephen lifted his gaze to Wendy, motionless in the bed. A tempest of emotions roared within him—hatred, rage, or perhaps something softer, something he couldn't yet name.

Stephen's heart churned with a single, unshakable certainty: he needed Wendy to stir from her slumber this very instant. A torrent of questions swelled within him, truths he ached to unravel and lay bare.

In the neighboring hospital room, Orson sat propped against his cane, his face etched with exhaustion. He cast a glance toward Janice and Aiden. "If there is anything you would like to know, don't hesitate to ask."

Janice met his gaze. "Now that you've settled in Efrery, do you have any plans to return?"

A faint chuckle escaped Orson, though weariness shadowed his features. "No, I'm here to stay. Efrery's a charming place—perfect for whiling away the twilight of one's life. Moreover, this is the very place where you and Stephen grew up. I would like to linger here, to breathe in the world that shaped you both."

Janice nodded, unsurprised by his resolve. After a brief pause, she added, "It won't be long before I declare war on the Welch family..."

"You needn't trouble yourself over me," Orson raised a hand, cutting her off. "I've only one plea—spare my three sons' lives. Whatever they've done, they're still of my blood."

"I'm afraid that's a promise I can't make. Harlan is already dead." Janice's eyes narrowed, her voice turning icy.

Orson stilled, his face a blank mask for a fleeting moment. Then, with a slow, burdened sigh, he murmured, "So it's come to that. Fate, I suppose. If they sowed such horrors twenty years ago, it's only fitting they reap the consequences now. Do as you see fit, Janice. Whatever path you carve against the Welch family, I won't stand in your way."

Janice studied the old man before her, a tangle of emotions weighing on her chest. In her younger days, she might have failed to grasp the depths of his choices.

Chapter 926:

But time spent with Aiden had softened her perspective, unveiling the quiet burdens Orson had borne across his lifetime.

First came the agony of parting from the woman he cherished, a love he could neither hold nor see. That yearning alone could have broken a lesser soul, but Orson had no luxury for defiance. Beneath the suffocating weight of the Welch family's demands, he bent again and again, trading his own joy to shield the one he adored.

He poured himself into the Welch family's rise, fathering children with a woman his heart never chose. Yet, when he believed he had secured a fragile peace for his beloved, fate dealt its cruelest blow.

The sons born of that loveless union turned their hands against the descendants of his true love, staining their legacy with blood. The White family—over a hundred souls—had vanished in the carnage, leaving only Stephen and Janice to carry the ashes of their lineage.

"Mr. Welch, let me arrange accommodations for you," Janice said, inhaling deeply and managing a smile. "It's a beautiful place with fresh air. I think you'll appreciate it. And there's a kind-hearted elderly man there. I think you two will get along."

"Anything you arrange, I'm sure to love," Orson responded, his eyes twinkling warmly as he looked at Janice with affection.

Noticing the time, Orson sighed. "I can't stay long. If the Welch family's spies discover I've been to Efrery, it could complicate things."

"Alright, let me walk you out."

Orson, however, gestured for her to stay. "No need to come with me. Too many prying eyes outside. Let's not attract attention."

With that, Orson exited the hospital room, Brad accompanying him.

As Janice watched Orson's stooped figure retreat down the hallway, her emotions were conflicted. Beside her, Aiden squeezed her hand, providing comforting warmth.

"Orson was once a formidable presence, feared and respected. Now, he appears so gentle, almost courteous."

"That might be what they mean by finding peace in old age." Aiden looked Janice in the eye and asked, "Next time, will you acknowledge him as your grandfather?"

"I don't know," Janice answered, her smile tinged with sadness. "For now, I can't. Yet the future holds many unknowns. Maybe one day, my feelings will change."

"That's true, the future is uncertain. But my feelings for you won't change."

Janice paused, touched by his words, feeling warmth spread through her. "You're getting quite good at this, aren't you?"

"We all evolve, and I'm no exception," Aiden responded with a lighthearted shrug. His gaze then shifted towards Wendy's hospital room. "After hearing what Orson shared, do you think it will change how you feel about Wendy?"

"My feelings towards Wendy depend on my brother. Whatever his opinion is, that will be mine as well."

Inside the hospital room, Stephen remained seated beside Wendy, his focus entirely on her, unwavering. For the first time, he examined her features intently, a level of scrutiny he had never permitted himself before.

Though they had been close many times before, Stephen had never truly looked at her face. Now, he observed the care she had taken with her skin. Despite her injuries and her pallid, unconscious state, her skin retained a smooth, tender quality. Yet, time showed no mercy. Even on her youthful face, faint lines had begun to emerge.

These lines narrated a tale—the evolution of a girl into the woman before him. Stephen experienced a surreal sensation. Viewing Wendy’s face seemed to unveil her entire life story.

Chapter 927:

As a child, she had been naive and desperate, willing to do anything for food. Her actions were often reckless. Orson later took her in and molded her into an assassin. She faced severe hardships, believing them to be expressions of love. To her, her scars were symbols of affection.

As an adult, she craved acknowledgment from Orson, which he never provided, leaving her feeling empty—until she encountered a boy. Her feelings for this six-year-old were complicated. Despite the inner turmoil, she wanted to possess him, to fill her void.

This boy had faced significant trauma, losing his desire to live, his spirit seemingly broken. Her heart ached for him. She claimed him as her slave to continue her existence.

She didn’t understand love or how to show it. Her scars were her only language of affection. She wasn’t sure if what she was doing was right or wrong. Yet, when her love for the boy became overwhelming, she couldn’t stop herself from leaving marks on him—marks that reflected the ones she carried herself.

Stephen shook his head, attempting to clear the vivid imagery that seemed almost real, as if Wendy’s life was unfolding in front of him. “I need to hear it directly from you, not just imagine it,” he whispered, his voice shaky. He tightened his grip on Wendy’s hand, his eyes brimming with emotion. “Tell me, did you ever love me?”

“Naturally, I did,” came a faint reply.

Stephen’s eyes widened in shock. Wendy had awakened without his notice.

“Stephen, you’re still alive. That’s good,” Wendy murmured weakly.

Stephen looked at her, overwhelmed with confusion.

He had many questions, yet now that she was awake, he found himself speechless. Suddenly, he clasped her hand tightly, a rush of emotions overwhelming him. The words he longed to say seemed to choke in his throat.

Wendy's pupils narrowed, yet she made no attempt to pull away.

Instead, she smiled, seeming to relish the sensation.

"Stephen, that's right, a bit harder!"

Her voice was raspy, carrying a hint of madness.

Stephen complied, increasing the pressure, biting down until Wendy's skin broke. A trickle of blood appeared.

"Stephen, I can actually feel it!" Tears appeared in Wendy's eyes as she expressed her gratitude. "Thank you for really understanding me." She reached up and clasped Stephen's hand, her nails pressing into his skin, drawing blood with her grip.

At that moment, they both seemed consumed by a shared frenzy, mirroring the kind of toxic romance often depicted online.

After what felt like an eternity, the madness between them subsided. However, the ordeal wasn't over. A doctor was summoned to attend to Wendy urgently.

While she appeared invigorated in spirit, her physical condition suffered. Recently awakened from a coma, her body was fragile. Stephen's intense interaction had overwhelmed her, causing her to lose consciousness again.

"The patient is stable now. However, I advise against such intense interactions in the future. She might pass out again," the doctor said.

Stephen, his cheeks coloring slightly, nodded in understanding. The doctor and nurse exchanged looks before leaving the room, affording them privacy.

"You're truly insane," Stephen said, his tone a mix of frustration and disbelief as he looked at Wendy.

Chapter 928:

Despite her weakened state, Wendy appeared spirited, a slight smile on her lips. "I've always been this way, haven't I?"

"That's different," Stephen responded, reaching for some food to feed her.

"How is it different?" Wendy asked, raising an eyebrow. "Could it be your feelings for me have changed?"

"Sorry, but my feelings haven't changed. I still hate you as much as ever." Stephen paused, his movements ceasing as he gazed firmly at Wendy. "You owe me, and you'll spend your life making it up to me."

So, you need to live a long life."

Wendy initially seemed uncomfortable, but her expression softened at his final words. "For a lifetime, then."

Stephen remained silent afterward. He gently stirred the porridge, cooled it with his breath, and carefully fed it to her.

Wendy quietly accepted the food, and unexpectedly, the tension between them eased.

At that moment, Stephen saw Wendy in a different light; she seemed like an obedient young girl, quietly waiting for him to feed her.

"Stephen, were you just smiling?"

“You must be seeing things.” Stephen quickly adjusted his expression, avoiding her probing look.

“You’re my Stephen. What could you possibly hide from me?” Wendy teased, a smirk on her face as she reached out to touch his face. However, as she moved, she winced, the action aggravating her back wound.

“What are you doing? Can’t you stay put?” Stephen scolded her, his brow furrowing. “Are you trying to make things worse for yourself?”

“I like it when you scold me—it shows you care!”

“Insane!” Stephen exhaled deeply, shifting Wendy carefully before continuing to feed her.

A light glimmered in Wendy’s eyes, one she had never displayed before. It was a kind of tenderness she had never known—a warmth coming from someone else. And that someone was none other than Stephen.

“Orson stopped by earlier.”

“What?” Wendy’s pupils contracted, and a look of fear briefly crossed her face.

Seeing her reaction, Stephen felt a pang in his heart. Orson obviously had a profound impact on her. The mere mention of his name triggered such a strong reaction. Clearly, her experiences with Orson were fraught with suffering.

“Stephen, what did he say?”

“He told me I should forgive you.”

Wendy froze, her eyes wide with disbelief. “Really?”

“Yes, it’s true. He expressed remorse for how he treated you. He also wanted me to tell you that you are, and always will be, his daughter.”

At those words, Wendy began to shake, her tears flowing freely. Her usual poise crumbled under the weight of her emotions. She wept quietly, yet her tears resounded loudly to Stephen.

For the first time, Orson had recognized her, openly affirming her as his daughter.

Stephen sat quietly beside her, offering tissues as needed. He might have exaggerated Orson’s message slightly, but the impact was just as he intended.

He was sure Orson would agree with his approach.

Chapter 929:

Their moment was interrupted by a knock at the door.

“Mom, Dad and I came to see you!” Daniel shouted from outside. Stephen’s face tensed. He was about to rise when Wendy clasped his hand.

“Don’t leave.”

“Your husband and son are here. Shouldn’t I leave you to your family reunion?”

“Stephen, I feel lost without you. Please, stay.”

Stephen pressed his lips together, pausing to consider. After a brief hesitation, he chose to remain in the room, stepping aside but staying close.

At that moment, the door swung open.

Roger entered alongside Daniel.

Upon spotting Stephen, Roger's face stiffened for a moment before managing a smile. "Oh, Stephen, you're here too."

Stephen simply nodded, saying nothing. His detached demeanor made Roger's smile fade.

As the distinguished leader of the Chadwick family, it stung Roger's pride to be snubbed by an actor, putting his reputation at risk.

"Mom, when the doctor said you were awake, Dad and I hurried here. We even brought your favorite dishes," Daniel said, unaware of the growing tension. His voice was full of cheer. "Why would you eat this? It lacks nutrients. Try what I've brought instead."

He frowned at the porridge on the table and dismissively shoved it aside.

Wendy's expression darkened as she asked sharply, "Who gave you permission to throw that away?"

"What?" Daniel muttered, taken aback, looking at Wendy with confusion. "Mom, I just thought..."

"Stop calling me Mom!" Wendy's face hardened, showing no sign of being swayed by Daniel's attempt to calm her. "I prefer porridge. Is that a problem for you?"

"No, no problem at all," Daniel quickly responded, his smile strained as he glanced over at Stephen, hoping for some support.

However, Stephen paid no attention, quietly arranging the items on the small dining table.

"Stephen, what are you up to?" Wendy asked with a frown, clearly unhappy as she observed his actions. "I'm not done eating yet."

As he continued to clean, Stephen suggested, "You should try what your son brought. It's full of nutrients. My porridge is not fit for your taste."

A twitch crossed Wendy's lips. Was there a hint of jealousy in his tone? She couldn't help but feel a flicker of happiness. Stephen had never displayed such feelings toward her before.

"Mom..." Daniel started, but was silenced by Wendy's frosty stare.

Feeling the growing tension, Roger intervened, pulling Daniel aside. "Your mother needs peace. We should go now."

"Maybe I should be the one to go. After all, you are her family," Stephen said, his voice flat and emotionless.

"Don't you dare move!" Wendy commanded, masking her delight with annoyance at Stephen's behavior. "I didn't give you permission to leave. Do you understand?"

Stephen turned to face Wendy but remained where he was, stepping to the side instead.

Chapter 930:

Wendy inhaled deeply, then turned her gaze to Roger. "Let's get a divorce."

Roger's expression darkened. "What did you just say?"

"I said we should get a divorce. Wasn't that clear?" Wendy responded with impatience.

"Wendy, you must be kidding, right?" Roger chuckled nervously, moving to take her hand.

But Wendy reacted quickly, grabbing a vase and hurling it in his direction. The vase struck him and broke into pieces on the floor.

“Roger, don’t mistake my generosity for weakness,” she stated, her eyes narrowing. “You’re well aware of what our marriage really is. I no longer need you to cover for me.”

“No, this isn’t happening.” Roger clenched his teeth. “I’ve defended you against rumors and suffered disgrace. You can’t just leave me.”

“Dad, Mom, what’s this all about?” Daniel cried out, confused. “After all these years, are you really talking about divorce?”

Stephen frowned, confused by Wendy’s behavior. What was she planning now? Why bring up a divorce with Roger so suddenly? Could this be because of him? The idea stunned him, his eyes swirling with conflicting feelings.

“Roger, this is me telling you, not asking you,” Wendy said coldly, as if Roger were nothing more than a stranger to her. “Now, leave.”

“You can’t do this to me!” Roger exclaimed, his eyes blazing with fury. “I’ve devoted years to you. You can’t just throw me away. If we divorce, I’m taking everything from the Chadwick family.”

“That’s fine,” Wendy agreed without hesitation.

Roger stood there, shocked, staring at Wendy in disbelief.

The Chadwick family had become very influential, and yet, she seemed ready to let go of it all so easily. Was this even possible? He frowned, feeling that something wasn’t quite right.

“You don’t need to be careful. The Chadwick family’s fortune might mean the world to you, but to me, it’s nothing,” Wendy said, her voice steady and free of deceit. “Tomorrow, I’ll instruct the lawyer to prepare the divorce agreement. I expect you’ll sign it, or else, you won’t receive a single cent.”

Roger squeezed his eyes shut for a moment before giving a subtle nod. “Fine.”

“Dad, have you lost your mind? The Chadwick family’s golden streak owes everything to Mom. If you two call it quits, what happens to us?” Daniel blurted out, his voice thick with worry. “I’m dead set against this divorce. I’ll rally my sisters—we’ll talk some sense into you.”

“Daniel, follow me.” Roger’s face turned to stone as he seized Daniel’s arm and started to walk out.

Daniel squirmed, itching to break free, but his father, often dismissed as a doormat by the rumor mill, had a grip like iron. Even with Daniel’s brawny frame, shaking loose felt like trying to wrestle a bear.

Once Roger and Daniel had stormed out, the hospital room fell quiet, leaving only Wendy and Stephen in the stillness.

“Why?” Stephen asked, his brow knitting in bewilderment as he studied Wendy. “Why go to all this trouble?”

“Because you’re jealous,” Wendy’s eyes softened, and she cast Stephen a rare, tender look, brimming with warmth and devotion.