

## Chapter 463 Being Exposed

On the dance floor, the man in the fox mask gently wrapped his arm around Jennie's waist, giving her a playful whirl. Ducking his head down, he jested, "Jennie, what's the secret to your irresistible charm?"

The compliment left Jennie feeling a rush of warmth spread across her cheeks, causing her to become slightly more bashful.

She was by no means a ballroom expert, yet she found herself there, twirling at the request of the mysterious fox-masked man. He was her knight in shining armor, thoughtfully shielding her from other suitors and patiently coaching her in the art of dance. His charming wit, his gentle demeanor, and his engaging conversation...

Jennie could sense herself teetering on the brink of affection for him.

Watching from a distance, Loraine could tell that Jennie was nearly entranced by the man's allure.

Resolute, she glided over to the dance floor and effortlessly slipped next to Jennie.

As the fox-masked man twirled on, in a dreamlike state, Loraine plucked Jennie from his grasp.

Jennie's eyes popped open in surprise, and seeing Loraine only added to her astonishment. "Lorrie, is everything okay?"

With a hushing motion, Loraine stood firm, arms folded



over her chest.

Without a partner by his side, the man abruptly halted his dance, his initial confusion quickly transforming into frustration. Yet, as soon as he realized it was Loraine, he fell silent, bowing his head with a heavy conscience, consumed by guilt.

Smirking, Loraine challenged, "Mr. Todd, aren't we old acquaintances? Why hide behind a mask when we could greet each other openly?"

Her accusation left Jennie's eyes wide with disbelief.

Internally sighing, Jimmie looked confused and asked, "What are you implying? I'm just a gentleman who found himself captivated by this enchanting woman at the ball..."

But his act couldn't continue, as Jennie had removed her own mask, her fiery gaze boring into him.

Caught in the act, Jimmie coughed awkwardly, removed his fox mask, and confessed, "Alright, I did know who you were when I asked you to dance, but my attraction to you was entirely genuine!"

Chewing on her bottom lip, Jennie was torn between anger over his deceit and shame that she had been so easily charmed.

As the ball began its final countdown, the surrounding guests fell into a unified rhythm. All Jennie could focus on was the irritating brooch that Jimmie had given her. In a moment of frustration, she pulled it off and handed it to Loraine.

"Lorrie, this came from Jimmie. I don't want it anymore. Take it. Maybe it'll crown you queen tonight!"

Caught off guard, Loraine didn't know how to react to the sudden gift.

Jimmie tried to interject but thought better of it, internally lamenting his circumstances.

Marco's influence had landed him in trouble once more.

Previously, he'd managed to rile up Jennie, yet he hadn't been able to soothe her fury. Her anger only escalated further. It felt like an impossible task!

Moreover, what if Marco spotted the brooch in Loraine's possession and misconstrued that as an invitation for a dance?

The mere possibility sent chills racing down Jimmie's spine.

Just at that moment, the countdown for the party's conclusion chimed, and the stage lights once more flared to life.

A single beam of light landed precisely on Loraine. With great enthusiasm, the host declared, "Our Ball Queen for tonight has been decided! Going by our statistics, the lady who has received the most invitations is..."

Under the spotlight, Loraine appeared slightly taken aback. Then, she gracefully removed her mask and took her place at the center of the dance floor.

The crowd gasped, "Lorraine! It's Lorraine!"

"That makes sense! Only she could pull off that dress in Vagow!"

Despite not having accepted many invites or brooches, the organizers tallied the sheer number of people who wished

to invite her.

When she was announced as the Ball Queen, everyone was wholeheartedly convinced, leading to a flurry of discussion.

"So, who's the King going to be?"

Then, another spotlight landed on Cayson. He was currently embroiled in a group of women, striving to maintain his gentlemanly decorum.

"Even though this gentleman in the golden knight mask hasn't danced with anyone tonight, he has received the highest number of female invitations. He is our deserving Ball King!"

As Marco danced with Loraine, Cayson, now alone, naturally became the focus of attention on the dance floor.

Upon hearing the results, Cayson made his way towards Loraine, offering his hand. "Lorrie, did you manage to rest well? Would you honor me with a dance now? The King and Queen are expected to share a dance after the ball."

With no solid reason to decline, Loraine extended her hand towards Cayson's.

But just as their palms were about to meet, a commanding voice boomed, "Wait!"

A tall man in the silver fox mask strode towards Loraine, positioning himself between her and Cayson as if staking his claim, effectively keeping them apart.

He wore a finely tailored silver-gray suit adorned with numerous brooches, and he held even more brooches in his hands. A count far exceeding the combined brooches of everyone else present.

Chapter 463 Being Exposed

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The man fixed a challenging gaze at Cayson, and scoffed, "I've received the most brooches. I should be the Ball King tonight."



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## Chapter 464 The Torres Family Reunion

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A hint of doubt flickered in Loraine's eyes as she examined the brooches on the man's attire.

Since the beginning of the ball, Marco had stuck to her side, mercilessly refusing other men's requests to dance with her. It was clear that he was too occupied to attend to other ladies' inviting.

In addition, it was apparent that Marco wasn't interested in the company of other women.

This opulent establishment was a part of the Bryant Group, of which Marco was the owner. Could it be that he pulled some strings, employing his influence to make this arrangement?

As Loraine's questioning gaze met his, Marco paused, subtly cleared his throat, then removed his mask, stating resolutely, "The honor of dancing with Loraine should be mine, Mr. Benton."

Cayson's eyes bulged, and he clenched his fists in immediate frustration. As expected, it was Marco!

The crowd erupted in surprise, exclaiming, "That's Marco!"

"Unbelievable! It's actually Marco! Who would have thought he'd be at the ball!"

As a cascade of exclamations surrounded him, Cayson





squinted and retorted with a cynical smile, "Mr. Bryant, this hotel is under your command. Are you planning to play dirty? I didn't see you on the dance floor earlier. And remember, the outcome hinges on the quantity of dance invitations, not on the number of brooches!"

Unfazed, Marco gave a mirthful chuckle in response. He stretched his neck and unfastened the top buttons of his shirt, letting his gaze wander among the crowd.

"Would any of the ladies present decline a dance with me?"

Marco's demeanor was distinctly different from Cayson's gentle sophistication; his masculinity was palpable. A playful smirk played on his lips, and his gaze, brimming with an untamed spirit, casually scanned the crowd.

Most of the women present clutched their chests, gasping for breath, and a number of them shrieked in excitement, "I would! I would love to!"

Among them was Jennie, who was fascinated by the brewing tension, much to Jimmie's displeasure.

Loraine's mouth twitched at the sight of Marco's flamboyant display.

Flashing a confident grin, Marco's gaze met Cayson's. A clear taunt signaling his impending triumph.

He then approached Loraine, bending slightly. "Loraine, it's a privilege to share another dance with you."

The overt display of Marco's affection was too much for Loraine to bear.

The recollection of Marco's candid admission of feelings that evening caused her heart to flutter. She took a step





back and said apologetically, "I'm exhausted tonight. I don't wish to dance. Mr. Bryant, please find another dance partner. I'll be leaving now."

She tightly grasped Jennie's hand, looking for help. Jennie happened to be trying to get away from Jimmie and hastily exclaimed, "Lorrie, let me give you a ride back!"

Loraine nodded in agreement. Observing this, Cayson swiftly approached them.

"Jennie, both you and Lorrie have had a bit to drink. Allow me to drive."

This time, Loraine didn't object.

Marco held his hand outstretched until the three of them had departed. His hazel eyes, deep and icy, radiated a chill. Without uttering a word, he made his way to the resting area. Sensing his mood, everyone wisely chose not to interrupt his solitude.

Jimmie approached Marco, giving him a consoling pat on the shoulder. He breathed out a sigh of solidarity and muttered, "Bro, I did all I could."

Alas, in the process, he had even fueled Jennie's anger.

Marco shot him a glance and responded icily, "You seem rather pleased with your womanizing. Hard to believe you claim you've done your best."

Jimmie, taken aback, gazed at Marco with eyes filled with disapproval.

"Wasn't I just trying to be friendly, to extract information for you? Now, Jennie dislikes me even more..."





With a thin smile, Marco remained silent. This self-proclaimed ladies' man boasted of his numerous conquests. Yet, it seemed his prowess in winning a woman's heart was mediocre at best.

But still, Jimmie was a well of experience Marco could learn from. His tutorial on conversational skills with women came from Jimmie.

This time, Marco wore his heart on his sleeve and confessed his emotions. The memory of Loraine's reaction still stung, though, causing an ache in his heart.

After a moment of contemplation, he asked his buddy, "Is there any other way to win over Loraine's family, other than flattering Jennie?"

If the Torres family gave him a chance, he might be able to soften Loraine's defenses.

On the other end, Cayson escorted Jennie home before taking Loraine back to her place.

His journey ended at the Torres residence.

Loraine expressed her gratitude before Cayson asked, "Lorrie, aren't you going to invite me in?"

"I think it's best if you come over next time. I need some rest now," Loraine declined.

Cayson, realizing her mood was off, didn't push further. He silently watched as she walked into the Torres family villa.

An assortment of thoughts filled Loraine's mind tonight. She experienced a blend of emotions and let out a gentle sigh.

The sight that greeted her when she opened the door left her momentarily speechless. It all rushed back to her, draining the color from her face.

Usually, Aldo would be fast asleep at this late hour. But he was awake, seated in the host's chair, clutching his cane, and staring into the void.

Rowan, still in his military uniform, was seated on a side chair, two seats away from Aldo, his head bowed.

Wesley, known for his lightheartedness, was slumped in his chair, his usually cheerful face clouded with thought.

A sense of unease gripped Loraine's heart. It was a rare sight, seeing all of them together, ever since she had left to marry Marco.



## Chapter 465 Let Bygones Be Bygones

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As Aldo lifted his gaze and spotted Loraine, a grin stretched across his face. With effort, he raised a hand in a wave, still grinning. He called out, "Lorrie, come over here. We rarely get the chance to meet."

Loraine's presence was like a breath of fresh air, stirring life into the previously stagnant atmosphere, and the three formerly quiet men all had twinkles of delight in their eyes.

Their gaze was drenched in affection. When their eyes landed on her, it seemed as if they were yearning for someone else through her.

A lump formed in her throat, and Loraine nestled against Aldo's knees, crying softly.

"Grandpa, I regret my actions. If I hadn't impulsively left earlier, our family would have had the chance to be whole... I was away for three years. My absence caused pain to you, to Rowan, and to Wesley..."

She'd spent the last three years devoid of family companionship.

Her love for Marco was what sustained her during those sleepless nights. But, Marco, far from providing comfort, had only caused her anguish. In the end, she was left with nothing.

Aldo gently stroked her hair with his warm, weathered



hand, speaking with a raspy chuckle. "Silly girl, no need for apologies. Ever since your parents passed away, you've been our most cherished gem."

As the topic arose, the three men, each of a different age, appeared somber. Aldo let out a sigh and continued, "Grandpa is growing old, and I can't escape the weight of your parents' passing. I've been burdened for over a decade, but you, Rowan, and Wesley, are still young. It's time to find some relief."

He turned to his only two sons. Rowan and Wesley averted their gazes, trying to conceal their tears.

"Stubborn kids... We're all stubborn. It's been over a decade. Even if it's difficult to believe, you must accept reality. The dead are gone, and the living should not carry the weight of their absence forever."

Loraine bit her lip, clutching the hem of her clothes.

She knew that Aldo who said those words was the one who found it hardest to let go.

Perhaps it was because he had seen the pocket watch Loraine had found, which had stirred up emotions, or maybe it was because of his advancing age that he felt an urgency. He didn't want his sons and granddaughter to remain anchored in the past like him.

Aldo exhaled deeply, gazing at Loraine with tenderness. "Lorrie, the anniversary of your parents' passing is nearing. Many years have slipped by, and it's time we let them rest in peace."

Embracing Aldo tightly, Loraine whispered, "Grandpa..."

She grieved for her parents, but the larger part of her sorrow



came from knowing how much her loved ones suffered on this day.

Aldo tilted his head back slightly, staring at the ceiling as he chuckled lightly. "When your mother married your father, he was so smitten by her that he would literally do anything for her. Your dad, my best son, it pains me to see him like this. That's why I've been hard on your mother. Had I known it would lead to this, I would have acted differently..."

In the midst of the conversation, Wesley, who had been quiet till now, voiced out in a somber tone, "Father, all these years, I've been wandering the globe. But in reality, I've been secretly probing into the mystery surrounding my brother's untimely demise."

"You..." Aldo was taken aback. His face blanched, his lips trembling, he stuttered, "You foolish child, we've combed through it innumerable times, the conclusion always being that it was merely an accident."

Unmoved by Aldo's words, Rowan maintained a frosty expression and spat out, "I don't believe it."

Tears welling up in his eyes, Wesley inquired, "Rowan, did you uncover any substantial proof?"

"No," Rowan replied, his lips tightening as he sighed deeply, "I simply have this gut feeling that my brother wouldn't just die in a car crash. Someone's behind this!"

"But there aren't any leads!" Aldo clutched his chest, voice laden with exhaustion, "Regardless of our efforts, it points to an accident. It's done and dusted. Stop exerting yourself further."

Rowan and Wesley however remained silent, locking eyes but offering no response.



The demise of the Torres family's eldest son, Farley, was a topic shunned in the household. Everyone refrained from bringing it up. Aldo was under the impression that everyone had come to terms with it, but he was surprised to learn that the brothers had been surreptitiously probing into it all along.

With Rowan wielding political power and Wesley amassing global connections under the guise of artistry, they were working behind the scenes to unravel the truth, attempting to dig up clues from the well-buried past.

This was Loraine's first exposure to the intricate details of her parents' death before her family, and she was visibly shocked.

"Rowan, Wesley, do you genuinely suspect foul play?"

Aldo's face turned even more ashen, unnoticed by the others, as he clutched his heart even tighter.

After a heavy sigh, Rowan began in a subdued voice, "The incident from that year was abrupt and riddled with ambiguity..."

Wesley, wearing a look of anguish, nodded in agreement with a rueful smile. "Indeed. They had merely taken Lorrie for a spring outing in the countryside when their car plummeted off the cliff, ending in a catastrophic crash. There was no trace of anything. Could it have been a brake failure or some unforeseen occurrence? No one knew. In those days, cars weren't equipped with vehicle recorders, and the route was devoid of surveillance, leaving us without any insights."

But the most pressing question...



The two brothers glanced at Loraine, their faces a mix of confusion and relief. "Lorrie, you should've been in the car that day, but you strangely weren't. It's fortunate that you weren't aboard, which allowed you to survive miraculously."



## Chapter 466 Insist On Investigating

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Lorraine was baffled. Her memory of that particular year was a blank slate.

All she could recall was that she spent her childhood in a rural orphanage before the Torres family reclaimed her. How she ended up in the orphanage, out in the country, remained a mystery, with the Torres family providing no clarity.

What had transpired on that desolate, uninhabited road years ago?

Then, there was an unexpected candid conversation today. Rowan seemed no longer interested in keeping secrets. He laid bare the findings of his investigation.

"In an attempt to climb the military ranks and unearth more information, I've performed numerous deeds of valor. Years ago, I hired a criminal investigator to dig into the car crash. She discovered a piece of overlooked information."

Listening, Wesley was taken aback and questioned with apprehension, "What information?"

"The traffic data from the car showed it made a stop on that lonesome road, and our brother and sister-in-law disembarked. I searched for other CCTV footage from the area and found a couple who may have interacted with them."

"So who is this couple? Have you located them?"

Rowan shook his head, sighed, and replied, "The trail has gone cold. This couple was elusive, seldom seen on CCTV. It was a long process to locate them in the footage. My suspicion is that they are part of a habitual human trafficking ring. They tricked our brother and sister-in-law, snatched Lorrie, and instigated the car crash. Unfortunately, due to underdeveloped technology back then, many leads went cold, and the criminals who fled left no traces."

He even wondered if Farley had been impaired at the time of the accident...

Farley was a mechanical expert, particularly skilled with car engines. He would have certainly noticed if something was off with the vehicle.

Unless, of course, he was in no condition to identify or fix it at the time.

This supposition was too heart-wrenching for Rowan to share with his family.

Upon hearing this, Loraine was taken aback. So this was the hidden story?

She was abducted by traffickers, ended up in the countryside, and then in an orphanage. It all seemed to make sense.

Regrettably, she was too young to remember anything from that period. Otherwise, she might have unearthed some leads.

A heavy silence enveloped them all, the pain of old wounds reopening.

Finally, Wesley broke the silence, "I remember when we



discovered my elder brother and sister-in-law's bodies, Lorrie was nowhere to be found. Rowan was frantic, searching every nook and cranny. Back then, I never imagined that Lorrie might have been kidnapped by human traffickers."

The Torres brothers had maintained a strong bond since their youth. Despite occasional conflicts, they always stood firmly by each other's side.

They both idolized Farley, choosing careers completely detached from the world of commerce, thereby exempting themselves from competing with Farley for the family fortune. Their lack of interest and desire to prevent a rift between them acted as key motivators.

With Farley's untimely death, the responsibility of unraveling the cause and finding Loraine fell upon Rowan. As a army man, he devoted himself to the mission, leading to extended periods of time spent away from home.

But as Rowan had stated, he hit a dead end.

For years, Wesley had undertaken similar quests, yet his findings were on par with Rowan's. All signs pointed towards a tragic accident, except the mysterious absence of the couple.

No one had ever seen them. Even the head of the orphanage that had once housed Loraine was in the dark. He had only found Loraine, a little girl with no backstory. The trail ended there, all leads evaporating into thin air.

Amidst their intense brainstorming, Aldo, weary and faint, interjected, "Isn't it time to let go? It's been years. Why continue this self-inflicted torment?"

Observing Aldo's pale complexion, Loraine quickly fetched

him a glass of water.

His features eased slightly as he took a sip, yet Loraine remained resolute and unwilling to back down.

She had been oblivious to the story behind her parents' passing, but now that she heard these doubts, she couldn't turn a blind eye.

"Rowan, Wesley, based on your accounts, isn't our best shot at uncovering the truth in finding this elusive couple?"

Aldo, a lump forming in his throat, gasped for breath. He blurted out, "Lorrie! It's one thing for them to get tangled up in this. Why are you stepping in?"

Loraine, trying to soothe Aldo, replied earnestly, "Grandpa, I was too little then, I remember nothing. Now that I am aware, it's my duty as their daughter to pursue the truth!"

Gazing at Loraine, whose features were a striking reminder of his eldest son, Aldo couldn't help but break down.

Her tenacity was all too familiar...

Yet, the harsh reality was Farley was gone, never to return.

Aldo was overcome by grief, a sudden bout of dizziness washing over him, causing him to collapse.

With her eyes wide open, Loraine held Aldo and shouted anxiously, "Grandpa!"

