

Chapter 620 Marco's New Residence

Having received Marco's address, Loraine immediately set off, her confusion deepening with each passing minute.

Upon arrival, she was taken aback.

Before her stood a nondescript residential building, so aged that it resembled an apartment rented by a recent college graduate.

Could this be the place Marco mentioned?

Perplexed and startled, Loraine confirmed she was at the right location before stepping into the elevator.

Fortunately, the elevator didn't show as much age.

But as she reached Marco's floor, her certainty wavered.

The hallway was exceedingly narrow, and the floor was lined with over a dozen doors. The rooms likely didn't exceed 30 square meters in size!

It was hard for her to imagine that Marco, once a billionaire, was now living in a space smaller than the Torres family's bathroom.

Was Marco in such dire financial straits? Hadn't he just sold his shares in the Bryant Group? Even if he didn't want to use that money, surely he didn't need to subject himself to such conditions.

With a myriad of emotions churning within her, Loraine rang the doorbell.

The security door was promptly opened to reveal Marco dressed in a crisp white shirt. His delight at seeing her was unmasked, and he hugged her in warm welcome.

"You're here."

His attire gave the impression of a financially struggling college graduate. Coupled with his handsome features, it lent him an air of innocence.

Loraine was ushered into the room in a daze.

She looked around. The room, though sparse, was immaculate with just a bed and a computer table. The bathroom was positioned to the left of the entrance.

The whole place was neatly kept, exuding a fresh scent devoid of any trace of alcohol.

Loraine felt a small measure of relief. Thankfully, Marco wasn't resorting to heavy drinking to drown his worries. It appeared he was moving on.

Taking a deep breath, she turned to Marco. After a moment of hesitation, she queried, "Marco, did you rent this place? If you're uncomfortable here, I can buy you a bigger house. This isn't about the money, but you shouldn't be inconveniencing yourself."

Marco appeared taken aback. Observing her careful regard for his self-esteem, he felt a mix of amusement and tenderness.

He enlightened her about his true intentions for purchasing this small house. "No, thank you. It's in close proximity to your



place, which makes it convenient for me to visit. Moreover, buying a villa can be quite a hassle, so I picked this small place casually."

Despite his upbringing in the affluent Bryant family, Marco was adaptable. During his early days of entrepreneurship abroad, he had rented numerous apartments.

Silently, Loraine made a quick comparison. It took her less than five minutes to drive from the Universe Group to Marco's place. Even on foot, it wouldn't take long. Moreover, it was quite near to her apartment.

He chose to live in such a place to be closer to her. Loraine was both touched and worried, immediately offering, "In that case, I'll cover the cost!"

Despite having already purchased it and completed all the paperwork, Marco hesitated.

Was Loraine's concern primarily rooted in the belief that he was penniless?

If he revealed his position as the CEO of Solar Company, and that he now possessed more assets than the Bryant Group at its height... Would Loraine still be so attentive?

Marco had to admit a part of him enjoyed this level of attention from Loraine, and perhaps he was exploiting it somewhat.

With that thought, he guiltily looked away and coughed, not clarifying his actual financial situation, almost validating her belief of his poverty. "No, I can still afford it. I don't want you to bear the cost."

Loraine perceived his refusal as an effort to protect his pride, and hastily offered, "I'm not giving you money for nothing. You could work at the Universe Group..."



At this suggestion, Marco couldn't help but recall Marina's previous call. He smiled, raising an eyebrow, "Both the Bryant Group and Universe Group wish to employ me?"

Lorraine's brows knitted. "The Bryant Group?"

Marco revealed Marina's proposition of making him her special assistant at a high salary.

Lorraine scoffed. "How audacious of the Bryant family!"

On further contemplation, she considered the idea of Marco helping manage the Universe Group.

"If you're willing, it's not off the table. I highly value your capabilities. I could appoint you as the CEO directly. I firmly believe the Universe Group will scale greater heights with you onboard."

Seeing her earnestness, Marco burst into laughter. He leaned in closer. "But... I don't want to be the CEO of the Universe Group. I just want to be your boyfriend... and husband."

Under his intense gaze, Lorraine's cheeks flushed. "Watch your words. You haven't completed your probation period yet!"

Marco chuckled, wrapping his arm around her waist.

"Should I put my best foot forward to secure a high rating in your heart, to expedite the probation process?"

His broad, warm hand on her waist sent tingling waves coursing through her body.

Lorraine was rapidly succumbing to his charm, but refused to concede so easily, fighting the firm hand on her waist.

"Then, what are you planning? Actions speak louder than words."



A grin playing on her lips, Loraine added, "Speaking of which, I came in such a hurry earlier that my legs are a little sore."



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Chapter 621 The Bryant Group Withholds Wages

Marco's smile held a certain depth, remaining silent as he lifted Loraine in his arms and gently laid her on the nearby soft bed.

Despite its simplicity, the bed was clean and meticulously prepared. Loraine's heartbeat quickened as her surroundings registered. But before she could succumb to her nervousness, Marco withdrew slightly, sinking to his knees beside the bed to carefully massage her shoulders and legs.

"Is this comfortable?" Marco asked.

Loraine found herself unable to suppress a satisfied sigh, murmuring, "It's nice."

While continuing the massage, Marco brought up, "Although I declined the Universe Group's offer earlier, there's another position at your side I find intriguing."

Loraine, reclining on the fresh bedsheets and immersed in the crisp, cool scent that surrounded Marco, felt her eyelids growing heavy. Struggling against the sleepiness, she managed to cast a lazy glance his way, querying, "What position might that be?"

With a soft chuckle, Marco answered, "Marina suggested... I'm your toyboy, a kept man."

At this, Loraine's eyes flew open, her body tensing in surprise.

"However, I'm aware you wouldn't entertain a kept man. That

Chapter 621 The Bryant Group Withholds Wages 🎁 +120 Points at most
said, I'd be more than pleased to serve as your personal butler,"
Marco added.

Lorraine was astonished to hear him say that.

Flushing, she looked at him haughtily and retorted, "Being my butler requires a high standard. Above all else, you need to know how to serve. Do you think you can manage that?"

She hadn't forgotten how inept this self-proclaimed servant had been on the plane, nearly causing a serious mishap.

Lorraine was confident Marco could handle a role in the Universe Group, but she had reservations about his aptitude for personal service.

Thus, she declined politely, "Thank you, but I'll pass."

Marco lifted an eyebrow, an air of self-assurance about him. "How can you be certain it's not my forte if you haven't experienced it? Tell me, how would you like to be served?"

Lorraine surveyed his humble quarters again, acknowledging there was little he could do at the moment. However, she had to concede that his massage skills were quite remarkable.

That... could be considered service, right?

Gathering herself, Lorraine shifted her position to lie on her stomach and said, "Then, how about a back rub? Let's see how you fare."

In that moment, she felt like a rich woman ordering a masseur at a luxury spa, and she blushed at the recollection of Marina's words. Luckily, her current position hid her reddened cheeks from Marco.

Conversely, her view was blocked. She couldn't see Marco's

Chapter 621 The Bryant Group Withholds Wages 🎁 +120 Points at most actions, which in turn amplified her other senses, particularly touch.

Behind her, Marco's steady breathing filled the silence. Then, the bed dipped slightly next to her, indicating he had taken a seat.

Although their bodies didn't physically connect, Loraine was acutely aware of their close proximity.

She suddenly felt that her earlier request was like shooting herself in the foot. Her nervousness was palpable, evident by her curled toes.

Marco's hands gently traversed her back, moving from the nape down to her lower back, applying the perfect amount of pressure. The delicate sensation ignited a soft tingle along her spine. Loraine's eyes grew watery, her grip on the bedsheet tightened, and she bit her lower lip.

She wanted to call a halt to this, but she feared her shaky voice would betray her unease.

Seemingly picking up on the fraught atmosphere, Marco remained silent. His touch continued, as though he desired more intimacy. Leaning down, he gently pressed his lips to her shoulder blade.

At that moment, the computer on the nearby table pinged with a string of notifications, jarring both of them.

Snapping back to reality, Loraine swiftly sat upright, awkwardly wrapping herself in the blanket. Attempting to dismiss the situation while retaining her composure, she coughed lightly and said, "You should, um, perhaps address your business first."

Marco's gaze held a glimmer of disappointment and an undercurrent of desire.

Lorraine's cheeks flushed deep red, but she kept her cool, confidently asserting, "Well, what are you waiting for? Remember, you're still on probation!"

With a sigh, Marco swiveled around to the computer desk and began working.

Overcome by curiosity, Lorraine stepped out of bed, padding barefoot toward Marco. On the screen, she noticed an opened article headlined, "Stunning Insider Scoop on the Tumbling Stock Price of The Bryant Group!"

Below the article was a detailed clarification from a Bryant Group employee.

"So, it seems slandering online comes at no cost or consequences? Allow me to clarify that the current state of the Bryant Group has nothing to do with Mr. Bryant. The predicament is entirely due to the group's own actions and decisions!"

The employee revealed that after the group replaced its president, his contract was unlawfully terminated, and his salary was unjustly withheld.

He pledged to use legal avenues to seek due compensation, arguing that if the Bryant Group could afford to fund defamatory campaigns, they should also settle their overdue payments to former employees.

The clarification provided a logical explanation of the sequence of events, resonating with many ordinary workers.

Several former Bryant Group employees also stepped forward to substantiate the clarification.

"When Mr. Bryant was in charge, we never had issues with our

Chapter 621 The Bryant Group Withholds Wages 🎁 +120 Points at most wages. Even upon leaving the company, our colleagues received proper settlements. But as soon as he left, our salaries vanished! I wish I had left earlier!"

In no time, the news story titled "The Bryant Group Withholding Wages" replaced the previous trending topic slandering Marco and dominated the headlines.



Chapter 622 The Universe Group's Declaration

In a matter of hours, public opinion took a dramatic turn, leaving Loraine dumbstruck.

Though netizens were easily swayed by the news, the genuine sentiments of the workers remained steadfast. Now, regardless of how many rumors the Bryant family circulated about Marco, they would always be at a disadvantage while they still owed employee wages.

Observing Marco's tranquil demeanor, Loraine couldn't help but question, "Did you orchestrate all this?"

Marco elaborated, "Even after my departure from the Bryant Group, I still maintain connections from my many years there. As soon as the negative news surfaced, I had Carl reach out to the former employees who had left the Bryant Group to testify against it."

Loraine found herself taken aback.

This man... Despite his humble dwelling, Marco still managed to pull strings behind the scenes, utterly outmaneuvering Marina.

In that moment, Loraine couldn't help but reflect on the vast disparities between individuals.

She recognized that the strategies she had directed the public relations department to employ, while advantageous, paled in comparison to the current state of affairs.

Following a brief silence, she earnestly offered, "It's because you've earned their trust. Even after departing the company, they are willing to back you."

Marco was often depicted as stern and aloof, seemingly devoid of emotions. However, those who worked under him knew he was a man who staunchly separated personal feelings from work. For the working class, a boss like him was preferable to a seemingly cordial persona concealing a vicious character.

Moreover, Marco was known for generously rewarding employees who met his exacting standards. Carl's unflinching loyalty to him was proof of that. Numerous employees held him in high regard, so they couldn't just stand by as Marina defamed him.

A hint of softness appeared in Marco's eyes as he smiled at Loraine. "You trust me to this extent?"

"Undoubtedly."

She had the best understanding of Marco's rigid professionalism at work. Marina's efforts to besmirch him were misguided, as a simple verification process would readily discredit the rumors.

With this in mind, Loraine's gaze hardened. Simply clarifying the truth wasn't sufficient. The Bryant family had tarnished Marco's reputation because he declined to aid them. They ought to pay for their actions this time.

"Given the Bryant family's total lack of decency, they deserve no consideration from me. I still hold all the evidence of Marina and Laura's plot against me. Now that you are no longer tied to them, there's no need for you to worry about their welfare. I'll disclose all the evidence, fan the flames, and let everyone see their true colors," Loraine asserted firmly.

When Loraine insisted on assisting him, Marco was both pleased and worried.

"Given that the Universe Group and the Bryant Group maintain a partnership... This action might irreparably damage the Bryant Group's reputation, which in turn, could negatively impact the Universe Group's image. Perhaps you should reconsider?"

While Marco was touched by Loraine's willingness to defend him, he couldn't ignore the fact that she was currently the CEO of the Universe Group.

If her actions led to any negative repercussions for the Universe Group due to her advocacy for him, some shareholders of the Universe Group might start causing problems for her.

Loraine understood Marco's worries but didn't consider them to be too significant.

"The Universe Group's relationship with the Bryant Group is one of cooperation, not dependence. We won't be significantly impacted by this."

Seeing her unwavering stance, Marco had to acquiesce.

Shortly, the Universe Group's public relations department posted the evidence online, and as expected, it sparked a public uproar.

Marina's peculiar actions would have attracted massive criticism had they been committed by anyone else, but she had managed to weather the storm under Marco's protective shield until now.

Now that all her scandals were laid bare, the collective memory



of the internet was triggered. Coupled with recent events, comparisons between Marina and Marco were inevitable.

"Looking at the stark contrast between the Bryant Group now and its former state, the disparity between these two CEOs is glaring."

"Has the Bryant family lost their minds? How could they elevate such an incompetent successor, replacing Marco with this eccentric as the CEO? If any group is doomed, it's the Bryant Group."

"Marco is a child the Bryant family raised for over two decades, and he served them without compensation all those years. Their cold-hearted expulsion of him speaks volumes, let alone their poor treatment of their own employees."

As the news spread, netizens turned their backs on the Bryant Group en masse. It was at this moment that Marco's phone rang once again.

Upon glancing at the caller ID and seeing Liza's name, he fell silent, hesitant to answer. He opted to mute the call and set the phone aside.

Loraine suggested he answer, but Marco smirked, "She's probably calling to beg for my help, as usual. I've grown weary of their games."

"Doesn't that make it even more interesting? Why not listen to Liza, who acted so superior when she banished you, now begging for your help?"

A playful smile played on Loraine's lips, and Marco, understanding her intentions, responded with a dry chuckle. He decided to answer the call, putting it on speakerphone.

