

Chapter 391 Parents

Marco was uncertain about what was on Loraine's mind. He was apprehensive that he might upset her and didn't want to lose her company. He shook his head. "It's fine. Please continue."

Loraine exhaled a deep sigh, trying to clear her thoughts, and resumed discussing business matters as if nothing had happened.

Most of the arrangements for Cheap and Fine Group's admission were settled, and Loraine only needed to confirm some details with Marco.

Soon, the business talk was concluded.

Loraine put her elbows on the table and covered her mouth as she coughed. She turned away from Marco, attempting to avoid eye contact with him, and said, "Let's call it a day."

"Wait a minute." Marco looked up at Loraine.

Loraine gave him a doubtful glance and asked, "What's the matter?"

Marco had been feeling down all day, and at that moment, he blurted out, "Loraine, do you still remember your parents?"

As far as he could recall, her parents left when she was young.

Loraine was luckier than him since she had people who

loved her and knew where she came from.

But what about him?

What was his true identity?

Marco's gaze went blank for a moment. When he saw the stunned expression on Loraine's face, he immediately snapped out of it.

How could he say something like that?

Loraine's parents must have left a painful mark in her heart. Even though he was feeling sorrowful, he shouldn't have brought up anything that could trigger her sadness.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say that," Marco apologized.

Loraine shook her head, sensing that Marco was feeling off today. She didn't press him on why he suddenly brought up her parents. Instead, she looked down.

As Marco's words lingered in her mind, she couldn't help but reminisce about her childhood.

Actually, she couldn't recall her parents vividly.

She attempted to remember, but her mind only held on to two blurry figures.

After a long pause, Loraine said in a low voice, "When I was very young, my parents died in a car accident, and I was sent to an orphanage in the countryside. It wasn't until middle school that my grandpa found me."

Marco's heart raced. Loraine was opening up to him about her past.

As Marco listened to Loraine, he sensed that something was amiss.

"Who sent you to the orphanage? Weren't you with your parents at that time?"

Loraine appeared confused and shook her head. "I don't know."

She couldn't comprehend why her parents had died in a car accident and why she had been sent to an orphanage. She was only reunited with her grandfather and uncles during her junior high school years.

They had always given vague explanations whenever Loraine asked about her past, and her memories of the countryside weren't very clear. As time passed, she stopped probing deeper into it.

Loraine confided to Marco, "My impression of my parents is vague. It's been a long time. I was too young at that time and I can't recall it now."

After all, she was merely a child back then, unable to recall everything clearly.

Loraine's concept of home was built by her grandfather and uncles after she reunited with them.

When Marco heard this, his heart ached, and he thought of himself.

Marco's impressions of his father, Winfred Bryant, came from the pictures he had left at home.

As for his mother, he now knew that Laura wasn't his biological mother. His real mother might have been a

shameless mistress or a prostitute.

Perhaps after giving birth to him, she didn't want him at all and left him to Winfred.

Or maybe she had already passed away.

"At least they love you very much," Marco consoled Loraine. "You survived the car accident. Your parents must have risked their lives to protect you."

Loraine was taken aback by his words and looked up at him.

"Yes, they must love me very much," she said with a softened expression.

Marco tried to hide his sadness by lowering his eyes. "I apologize. I spoke too much. Sorry for troubling you. Since we have nothing more to discuss, you can head back first."

Loraine was a little surprised by his sudden change in demeanor and wanted to ask him what was wrong, but she didn't dare.

Furthermore, why should she concern herself with Marco?

She collected her bag and stood up.

Marco didn't stop her.

As Loraine walked to the door, she looked back at him. Marco had his head lowered, and the shadow obscured his expression.

Her heart ached.

Even after she got back to her car, she couldn't stop thinking about Marco's lonely and sorrowful figure.

What was going on with him? What had happened?

He abruptly inquired about her parents. Could it have been related to his family?

After much hesitation, Loraine decided to ask Obot. She took out her phone, opened the chat interface with Obot and typed, "Obot, do you know what happened to Marco today?"

She figured if Marco could use Obot to inquire about her, she could do the same.



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Chapter 392 Sudden Heart Attack

Marco sat motionless in the coffee shop, his posture resembling that of a statue.

The setting sun cast a warm beam of light on his back.

Suddenly, the phone on the table vibrated.

It was Loraine calling Obot, as evidenced by the special ringtone. Marco's eyes shifted towards the phone.

He retrieved his phone and noticed that Loraine sent a message to Obot.

Upon seeing Loraine's message, Marco's heart felt a warm glow, and he seemed to come alive a bit.

He was glad that Loraine still cared for him, as he felt alone in the world with no one to care for him.

However, Marco did not want to tell Loraine that he was an illegitimate child.

He was still grappling with this fact and could not bring himself to speak about it.

Marco didn't want Loraine to know about his difficult background, nor did he want her to see his vulnerable side.

After a prolonged pause, he replied as Obot, "Nothing. It's just that something happened in the company and he felt

upset."

Lorraine's frown was apparent upon receiving Obot's message.

Did Marco believe that this excuse would deceive her?

She knew that Marco's excuse couldn't be true, as she didn't believe that the company's affairs would upset him so much. Frustrated with Marco's evasiveness, she stopped questioning him.

Waiting for a reply from Lorraine, Marco sighed in disappointment.

He didn't feel like returning to the office or his home. Feeling down, he texted his two friends and invited them to drink at a bar.

Jimmie and Slater were sitting on the couch, wine glasses in their hands, huddled in a corner, looking at each other.

Marco drank his wine like water.

He looked despondent yet still charming.

Jimmie whispered to Slater, "What's wrong with Marco?"

Slater shook his head, scratching it in confusion. He murmured, "Doesn't this scene feel familiar?"

Jimmie narrowed his eyes.

Last time, Marco got drunk for Lorraine.

Did they have another argument?

Jimmie couldn't bear to see his friend drinking glass after



glass of wine, so he teased, "What's going on, Marco? Did Loraine do something to upset you?"

Slater's disappointment was evident on his face as he could no longer hold back his words.

"Marco, you're terrible at chasing women. Are your two companies in the same team now? You and Loraine defeated the hijackers together on the plane. Your relationship with her should be closer. Why didn't you win her heart yet?"

Marco paused, pursing his lips in silence.

"Don't listen to Slater. But if you have any conflict with Loraine, tell us, and we can work out a solution to help you."

Marco shook his head, his voice hoarse. "It's not because of her..."

He fell silent once more.

Since he didn't wish to express his thoughts, he could only keep them tucked away in his heart.

At that moment, Marco's phone rang on the table, and he saw that it was from the landline of the Bryant family.

Marco grew even more upset and turned his head away.

The phone rang for an extended period before it was disconnected. Afterwards, there was another call from Carl.

Frowning, Marco answered the phone.

Carl informed him urgently. "Sir, your grandmother has been hospitalized due to an acute heart attack!"



Without even grabbing his coat, Marco quickly stood up and headed out, rushing to the hospital.

Marco still had feelings for his grandmother who had raised him.

Despite Liza's strict and sometimes ruthless behavior towards him, she had provided him with a good education and nurtured him to become an outstanding individual.

Besides, since Laura wasn't his mother, his grandmother was his only family besides Marina.

Addressing his two bewildered friends, Marco said, "I have something urgent to attend to, so I must take my leave now."

He quickly exited the bar, hailed a taxi from the roadside, and made his way to the hospital.

When he arrived at the hospital, Marco saw Laura and Marina already there.

They looked dispirited, not as lively as before.

Marco stood in front of the bed.

Liza was lying in the bed, her complexion pale, but her spirits were still high.

There was no sign of an emergency.

Upon noticing him, Liza turned her head to dab at her eyes and let out a deep sigh.

Marco understood that she was pretending to be sick, but all he could do was inquire, "Grandma, are you feeling okay?"

Liza responded, "Marco, I am too old, and my time is

drawing near."

Marco pressed his lips and looked down.

"Now that you know everything, I will reveal the truth to you. Even though you are not Laura's biological child, you have referred to her as your mother for so many years. After all, we are family."

Laura nodded humbly, no longer daring to be arrogant.

Liza continued, "Your sister and mother are still a part of our family, and we must consider their reputation. It wouldn't reflect well on our family if they were held accountable by Loraine. You must help them solve this problem."



Chapter 393 Carrot And Stick

Liza, who claimed to have a sudden illness, stared at Marco and threatened him.

In silence, Marco listened, growing increasingly disheartened.

He had believed Liza was genuinely ill and hurried back.

In reality, it was merely her tactic to force him to help Laura and Marina.

With a stone-cold expression, Marco asked, "What if I refuse to help them?"

Liza had indeed invested much effort in him, but it was all for the benefits of the Bryant family.

Did she view him merely as a valuable pawn rather than a family member?

Liza clearly hadn't anticipated Marco's refusal, leaving her momentarily stunned.

"Marco, I understand your anger. But remember, you're a member of the Bryant family. You cannot allow harm to our family interests and do nothing, right?"

Marco scoffed. "Family interests? Why didn't they consider the Bryant family when they acted as they did?"

It all came down to interests. What else was there to this family besides that?

Laura remained unconvinced, but Liza's warning put her and Marina in check, so she refrained from challenging Marco as brazenly as before.

"Marco, I may not be your birth mother, but I raised you. Marina is your half-sister. How can you be so heartless to us?"

With a slight lift of his gaze, Marco's expression remained cold.

He sneered, "If I were truly heartless, I wouldn't have assisted in cleaning up your messes from the beginning."

Since assuming control of Bryant Group, Marco had aided Laura and Marina on numerous occasions.

Yet now, they deemed him heartless. The irony!

No longer wanting to argue, Marco said indifferently, "Grandma, if there's nothing more to discuss, I'll be leaving. The company demands my attention. Contact me only for urgent matters."

Seeing how stubborn Marco was, Laura blurted, "Marco! Are you certain you won't help us? Aren't you afraid I'll expose you as an illegitimate child, ruining your reputation?"

At this point, if she and Marina were imprisoned, all would be lost. Laura took the gamble, attempting to sway Marco's decision.

Inhaling deeply, Laura continued, "Don't push me! If this becomes public, how could you bear the shame of



Anger fueled Marco's laughter. "Go ahead, tell the world. I couldn't care less."

Upon taking over Bryant Group, it had been on the verge of collapse.

What had he gained from Bryant Group? And what could Laura reclaim from him?

Fearless, Marco narrowed his eyes, coldly stating, "Since I took charge, I've never relied on my status as a Bryant. If you desire Bryant Group, try and see if you and Marina possess the ability to run it!"

Moreover, all shareholders had been won over by Marco's competence and followed him willingly. If Laura and Marina were capable of taking over, Liza wouldn't have to rely on Marco all these years.

Furious, Laura gritted her teeth, preparing to retort.

However, before she could speak, Liza interjected, "Enough! Laura, have you forgotten my words earlier?"

Laura was taken aback, but then she recalled that Liza had offered to assist them and convince Marco, on the condition that she and Marina wouldn't do anything to upset him.

Softly, Liza spoke after a pause. "Marco, I know better than anyone the extent of your contributions to Bryant Group. Nobody can dispute that."

Casting a frigid glance at Laura, Liza remarked, "You and Marina haven't been involved in the company for ages. What contributions have you made? If you're determined to





have a falling-out with Marco, so be it. Manage your affairs alone and don't trouble me again!"

Laura fell silent, left with no other option but to threaten Marco.

In fact, she understood that severing ties with Marco would do them no favors.

Upon reprimanding Laura, Liza shifted her attention towards Marco.

"Marco, I assure you that your position as the CEO of Bryant Group is secure. However, as a representative of the Bryant family, it's also your duty to care for everyone, right? You need to make a statement about this. Remember, they are family!"

Standing beside him, Laura anxiously awaited Marco's response.

His expression unchanging, Marco's eyes were cold and detached.

He suddenly realized that his role as the CEO of Bryant Group was merely a burden. A burden he could never escape.

Closing his eyes, Marco exhaled a deep sigh, as though releasing all his pent-up frustration.

He resolved to clean up Laura's mess one final time as repayment for her twenty years of dedication in raising him.

"Alright, I'll help them."

Chapter 394

Misunderstanding

The following day, negative news about Laura and Marina vanished without a trace.

If any people noticed anything amiss, their comments were promptly deleted.

Clearly, someone with considerable influence controlled public opinion.

In Universe Group

Loraine spoke with Rowan on the phone. Rowan was infuriated by the shifting online public sentiment. He sought to identify the individual responsible for deleting comments and deal with them accordingly.

However, recalling Marco's assurance that he would handle the situation, Loraine persuaded Rowan to stay out of it.

As soon as the call ended, Carl dialed in.

"Miss Torres, do you have a moment?" Carl inquired.

Loraine felt helpless. Had he picked up his boss's manner of speaking by? They both liked beating around the bush.

"What's going on?"

"Miss Torres, I wanted to discuss compensation with you." Carl proceeded cautiously. "I'm aware that the rumors

spread by Mrs. and Miss Bryant caused you significant harm. Mr. Bryant wishes for you to withdraw the lawsuit. He will compensate you for this."

Lorraine's smile faded.

"Rest assured, we'll do our utmost to make amends!" Carl added.

In an icy tone, Lorraine asked, "Is this Marco's idea? Why didn't he tell me himself?"

Carl said in an awkward tone, "He's busy right now."

If Marco had dared to say this to Lorraine directly, would he have even asked his assistant to do so?

Lorraine demanded coldly, "It's not the same. Let Marco speak to me."

On the other end, Carl frowned uncomfortably, glancing at Marco, who sat behind his desk.

"Mr. Bryant, I..."

Marco appeared unwell and visibly exhausted.

Taking the phone, he said lightly, "You can go now. I'll handle this myself."

Concerned, Carl departed, closing the door behind him.

Marco sighed. "Lorraine, it's me."

Lorraine's anger intensified. "Marco, do you honestly expect me to let Laura and Marina off the hook?"

Her voice was rigid, and Marco replied with a bitter tone,

"Yes."

Lorraine was infuriated. If he hadn't made a promise to handle it from the start, she wouldn't have been this angry.

But now, by breaking his promise, he had enraged Lorraine.

"Marco Bryant, don't you remember what you promised me? Is this how you handle things?"

Marco gazed downwards, his mouth slightly open, but no words came out.

Lorraine sneered as she took Marco's silence as the most fitting response.

"I see. Family is more important. I understand." With a sneer, Lorraine expressed her anger toward him. "Your loyalty to your friends and family is commendable, but please refrain from making promises you cannot keep in the future."

Her anger wasn't due to her inability to punish Laura and Marina, but because Marco had let her down.

He had promised her, and then broken that promise.

Regardless of the difficulties he faced, it was hard for Lorraine to accept this reality.

Marco didn't argue, silently accepting all the blame.

When Lorraine finished, Marco replied in a hoarse voice, "I'm very sorry for that."

Lorraine burst into laughter.

Why was this man so foolish?

Gritting her teeth, she asked coldly, "Don't you want to explain your reasons to me?"

"It's all my fault." Marco paused and murmured, "Lorraine, I'll do whatever you want to compensate you."

Lorraine's heart sank as she gripped the phone tightly.

She knew Marco had been acting strangely these past few days, and she had asked him about it both directly and indirectly. She even took the initiative to ask him why just now.

But Marco offered no explanation.

Perhaps she had overestimated her significance to him, believing herself to be different in his heart.

But what was the difference?

He would rather torment himself than confide in her.

Lorraine's words dripped with coldness as she spoke in a hard tone, "Fine, if you are so insistent on helping your family, I'll grant your wish. I won't sue them."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. Consider it repayment for your kindness in saving my uncle. We're even now."

Marco froze, his face darkening. "That's different. I saved your uncle, not for that. I want to compensate you because —"

"Let's make it clear, Marco. We're even now."

Lorraine's anger was palpable as she interrupted him, her

tone cold and unyielding.

Despite her words, Marco remained silent, his breathing growing heavier.

Lorraine's nose twitched.

She felt a sense of incompetence.

She had made up her mind when she had divorced Marco. How could she still be affected by him?

"My apologies, Lorraine," Marco uttered in a raspy tone.

Lorraine nibbled on her lip for a moment before abruptly ending the call.

