

## Chapter 1016 Rebound On Himself

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Struggling to get a clear view, the people blocked behind grew increasingly anxious, standing on their tiptoes in a desperate attempt to peer inside. Based on what Kaley said, was it possible that she knew the person on the bed?

At the front, Jaylah's expression immediately twisted into a frown when she heard her daughter's scream. She gestured impatiently for the men to step aside and took another look at the bed, equally in shock.

The person who lay naked on the bed was not Loraine, nor even a woman — it was Cayson!

Anyone familiar with Cayson's typically gentle visage would've found it difficult to reconcile it with that of the man who lay before them unconscious and covered with bruises.

Jaylah's expression shifted dramatically as a flurry of thoughts flooded her mind.

Her first concern was that she must have failed in her attempt to frame Loraine. In addition to that, she couldn't shake the looming dread of her partner, the treacherous Jaden, inevitably getting angry and wreaking havoc on her!

Drawing on her wealth of experience, however, she immediately regained her composure and quickly covered her daughter's mouth. Casting a cold glance at the scene, she said in a deep voice, "Get Kaley out of here immediately. I won't have her exposed to this mess!"

Upon hearing Jaylah's command, Vincent peered into the room but had his view obstructed by the servant, leaving him unable to see clearly.

He was puzzled. Judging from Jaylah's tone, it appeared her scheme hadn't gone as planned. What on earth could have gone wrong?

As Jaylah also thought about the situation, she recalled how she had indeed smelled the faint scent of perfume lingering in the air and seen Loraine in the custom-made dress. It seemed impossible that she had somehow not been affected!

Cayson stood out as the only potential cause.

Casting a cold, disdainful glance at the man sprawled on the bed, Jaylah was certain that it was Cayson who had thwarted her plans, leaving her feeling utterly repulsed.

She had long heard rumors that he liked Loraine. It was a real mess now!

She waved her hand, signaling for her men to take the gangsters away, and discreetly instructed them to clean up the scene. Then, she asked one of them to splash water on Cayson to wake him up.

Cayson felt a sharp pain coursing his body and woke up with a groan. Sensing an icy chill enveloping him, he suddenly realized that he was naked. Shocked, he glanced around frantically, his face immediately turning as pale as snow.

As a promising young talent within the upper echelons of society, how could he possibly carry on with life after today's scandal?

While he was still in a daze, Jaylah asked, "Mr. Benton, why are you here? Did someone set you up?"

His eyes filled with rage, he gritted his teeth and said, "Marco! It's all his fault!"

As soon as he finished his words, he caught sight of Loraine walking into the crowd with Marco's assistance.

Judging from the odd manner in which she walked, Cayson immediately surmised what had happened. Full of resentment, he looked up abruptly, only to meet Loraine's disappointed gaze.

Upon seeing the disappointment on her face, Cayson froze in place, as though he had been struck by a powerful blow.

Wasn't he responsible for all of this?

In the crowd outside, the sight of Loraine and Marco sparked some commotion.

After all, one of them was supposed to be the main character of tonight's events, while the other was the young master of the Cruz family who had been missing for several days!

It appeared Loraine had just been attracted by the commotion. She glanced around curiously at the crowd and feigned confusion. "What's going on?"

Vincent and Aria, who had already closed in on her, felt relieved to see that she was fine and proceeded to give her a summary of what had transpired.

Since Aria had a lot of experience, she quickly pieced together what had happened upon observing the way Loraine walked. At that moment, Cayson's real intentions immediately became apparent to her!

Boiling with anger, she spun around and pointed a finger at him, saying, "Stop lying! My cousin was with Lorrie. How could he have possibly found the time to set you up? Furthermore, what would the young master of the Cruz family set you up for?"

Upon hearing Aria's words, the crowd immediately considered Marco's identity, which left them with mixed feelings.

Loraine cast a glance at Cayson, her earnest disbelief slowly morphing into disappointment upon hearing that he was attempting to frame Marco.

In a soft voice, she remarked, "Yes, how could he have set you up?"

Cayson sensed an underlying tone of doubt in her words. With feelings of shame and embarrassment welling up within him, he couldn't help but look away and grit his teeth once more.

He realized that he should've considered the possibility of finding himself at odds with Loraine the moment he changed his mind and agreed to his father's plans.

Loraine closed her eyes and let out a heavy sigh. In truth, she was also surprised that Marco had chosen this course of action. She understood that such public humiliation would be more agonizing to Cayson than any physical pain.

As a person who placed great value on relationships, memories of their past flooded her heart. All she could do now was remain civil and refrain from humiliating Cayson any further.



## Chapter 1017 Reveal Their Hideousness

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The crowd whispered, and many people recognized Cayson.

Before Loraine took over the Universe Group and made some achievements, Cayson had represented the group in public and frequently appeared in Zodiac.

At that moment, everyone's eyes focused on Loraine, intentionally or unintentionally. How would she handle the scandal involving the Universe Group?

But Loraine remained expressionless. She tore her disappointed gaze from Cayson. She knew it wasn't the time to be emotional. Her priority was to protect the Universe Group's interests.

Instantly, everyone present reacted. None of them saw it as just a scandal because it involved the interests of two powerful clans.

Jaylah regained her composure and snapped, "Loraine! Why are you causing trouble at the Wilson family's banquet? Is the Universe Group trying to oppose the Wilson family?"

Loraine narrowed her eyes, acknowledging that Jaylah, being older, was indeed more cunning, ruthless, and quick to react than Kaley.

However, Loraine didn't explain herself, knowing it would put her at a disadvantage. Instead, she frowned and pretended to be upset. She said sadly, "As the CEO of the Universe Group, I apologize to the Wilson family for what has happened. But what Cayson did has nothing to do with the Universe Group."

From now on, he is no longer related to the Universe Group!"

After the failed plan, Jaylah immediately tried to drag the Universe Group into trouble. But Loraine was decisive, publicly dissociating Cayson from the Universe Group.

Cayson looked at Loraine in shock, his face turning pale. He said in disbelief, "Lorrie, how can you be so heartless? I don't believe it!"

Loraine lowered her eyes, unconsciously touching the butterfly ornament on her chest with one hand. Self-mockery appeared in her eyes, and the last trace of affection vanished.

Seeing her action, Cayson felt guilty. Then he heard Loraine say coldly, "It's done, and I won't show favoritism. Cayson has wronged the Wilson family, and he deserves to be punished. As for his punishment, the Universe Group will not interfere."

She looked at Jaylah as she spoke.

It was clear that Jaylah couldn't use Cayson to discredit the Universe Group. Loraine had publicly dissociated him from the group in front of so many people.

Jaylah gritted her teeth with hatred but changed the subject with a casual manner. "Then, I won't bring it up. But where were you when I called the CEO of the Universe Group just now, Miss Torres?"

She kept on questioning, "Are you coming to the Wilson family's banquet only to look down on us and refuse to respond? Are you deliberately trying to embarrass our family?"

In every sentence, she mentioned the Wilson family, not only to intimidate Loraine but also to firmly position her against the Wilson family.

Then, with a sneer, she added, "Or is this your way of framing



your subordinate? Did you deliberately create evidence of your absence? You owe the Wilson family an explanation today!"

Loraine frowned, about to speak, when Vincent behind her lazily interjected, "Didn't she already explain? What more does she need to say?"

As a member of the Wilson family, Vincent's words made Jaylah's constant references to the Wilson family seem embarrassing and ridiculous.

Knowing that Vincent and Jaylah didn't get along, Kaley quickly added, "Uncle, all Loraine needs to do is honestly tell everyone where she was, right? If she did nothing wrong, why can't she say? Don't you think we should clear this up for the reputation of the Wilson family?"

Giving a cold glance at Vincent's interference, Jaylah sneered, "Kaley's right. I'm doing this for the reputation of the Wilson family."

Then she turned to Loraine with a sudden smile and said, "And what about the young master of the Cruz family, missing for so long, showing up at the banquet with you, Miss Torres? Did you shamelessly seduce him and arrange to meet him here?"

Her words caused an uproar. Not only was Marco's presence a surprise, but if Jaylah's words were true, it meant these two had seen the upper class as their playthings!

People looked at them with unfriendly eyes. With a sneer, Jaylah continued, "I never expected the CEO of the Universe Group to be like this. No wonder Cayson turned out the way he did. Fortunately, we caught on early, and the Wilson family won't be associated with you anymore!"

"Who would want to be associated with such a company anyway?"



While they talked, Vincent's expression darkened. He knew Jaylah and her daughter were determined to cause trouble for Loraine today.

He glanced worriedly at Loraine, about to say something when he was interrupted by another man.

It was Marco saying calmly, "As the president of the Solar Company, I was discussing business with the Universe Group's president. I didn't realize it would be seen as something else. Must I reveal confidential business just to explain myself here, in the Wilson family's home?"

With a mocking smile, he added, "Is this how the Wilson family treats its guests?"





## Chapter 1018 The Solar Company's CEO

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As soon as Marco finished his announcement, everyone in the room was taken aback. They exchanged glances, wondering if they had misunderstood.

The president of the Solar Company? Wasn't he the long-lost son the Cruz family recently discovered? How did he become the CEO of the Solar Company?

The bigwigs in Zodiac were all well-acquainted with the Cruz family and the Solar Company.

The former was a powerful, prestigious family, esteemed and unreachable.

The latter was quickly making a name for itself internationally, having recently outshined the Cruz family by securing a number of significant contracts.

Marco was even better known to them, especially since he had been at the center of Zodiac's activities over the past few months.

As these various identities merged into one person, the crowd began to question their own ears, finding it hard to believe that one individual could embody all these roles.

Jaylah and Kaley were particularly taken aback. While disbelief was evident in their reactions, a hint of irritation also sparked in their eyes.

At the center of their attention, Marco was seen holding



Lorraine's hand. With a nod and a smile, Lorraine said, "Yes, I met Mr. Bryant here and we talked over some cooperative matters."

Her confirmation proved that Marco was the CEO of the Solar Company.

Jaylah looked uneasy, her expression serious as she said, "The CEO of the Solar Company has always been shrouded in mystery. Are we supposed to just take your word for it? I'm not convinced!"

While Marco's secret identity enhanced the potential advantages of partnering with him for Kaley, Jaylah knew this same identity would make him harder to manage.

For unclear reasons, today's gathering lacked any major members of the Cruz family. Only Aria attended, along with a few relatives of the Cruz family. Together with Jaylah, they voiced doubts about Marco's true identity.

Marco's expression remained unchanged. He casually lowered his head and sent a text.

Soon after, the assistant to the CEO of the Solar Company, who recently represented the company in Zodiac's business circles, walked into the room.

Everyone welcomed him with a greeting, and Carl, smiling, walked over to Marco, bowed, and respectfully said to him, "Boss."

Those who had just welcomed him were stunned, and the room fell silent for a moment.

Some quick-witted attendees quickly pieced together that Carl had once been Marco's assistant.

With this revelation, it became clear that Marco was indeed the CEO of the Solar Company. The crowd had no choice but to

accept it.

Kaley's face turned pale as she stared at Marco and Loraine's entwined hands. She said with a hint of sarcasm, "Who talks about business with such personal closeness as you two? Could it be that the leaders of the Solar Company and the Universe Group mix their public roles with private benefits?"

Marco responded with a cold look, "Loraine accidentally sprained her ankle. I was merely helping her up. Besides, I'm trying to win her over, so what's wrong with making her happy privately?"

Kaley's face darkened, and Vincent couldn't help but frown.

Clearly, Kaley had not given up on Marco!

He gazed deeply at Kaley and said softly, "In that case, the Wilson family doesn't need to investigate this matter. As for Cayson... Do you need our help to deal with him?"

His gaze was fixed on Loraine as he spoke.

Loraine shook her head and thanked him. The people Marco had called then escorted Cayson away.

Considering the dramatic turn of events at the banquet, there was no point in continuing. Loraine glanced at Kaley with narrowed eyes and a forced smile. She said calmly, "I'll handle the troublemaker appropriately. Thank you to the Wilson family for your hospitality. I will take my leave now."

Marco exited alongside her. The remaining guests in the hall exchanged embarrassed looks.

Soon after, Aria left. After casting significant looks at Jaylah and Kaley, Vincent also turned and left the scene.

Feeling uncomfortable and uninterested, the others decided to

leave as well.

Who would have guessed that the banquet, eagerly organized by Jaylah, would conclude in such a dismal and absurd manner!

Eventually, only Jaylah and Kaley were left in the room.

Kaley looked bitterly at Jaylah and exclaimed, "Mom, didn't you promise you could handle Loraine? Why did it turn out this way?"

Jaylah's expression also darkened. She was puzzled by Loraine's ability to dodge her scheme, which seemed perfect. Was Loraine just that fortunate?

As Kaley continued to complain, Jaylah sighed, preparing to console her daughter when she suddenly heard a servant's respectful voice at the door, saying, "Mr. Damon Wilson, you're back?"

A deep, affirmative response followed. Jaylah, squinting, discreetly pinched Kaley.

Kaley cried out in pain and began to cry. Just as she was about to question Jaylah's actions, a concerned voice from the doorway asked, "Kaley, what's wrong?"



## Chapter 1019 Distort The Fact

It was Damon, the Wilson family's second son, who approached Kaley with concern.

Upon seeing Damon, Kaley instantly realized why Jaylah had pinched her. She obediently lowered her gaze to conceal her inner resentment and sobbed softly, "Uncle Vincent scolded me..."

Jaylah's eyes gleamed with satisfaction as she smiled.

She despised Vincent because he constantly thwarted her and ruined her schemes!

According to what Kaley had said, it now seemed as if Loraine had enticed Vincent to side with her. Given the hints they had previously dropped to the Wilson family, Damon would surely feel even more repulsed by Loraine. He would also be furious with Vincent for aiding an outsider.

Just as expected, a frown formed on Damon's face. As he was about to inquire further, Jaylah pretended to comfort Kaley by patting her back, but she pinched her again surreptitiously.

The pinch really hurt, and Kaley, grasping her mother's intent, burst into tears. She cried so hard that she ran out of breath, unable to speak.

Jaylah feigned distress, cradling her daughter and consoling her. She turned to Damon with a sorrowful expression and sighed, "Damon, I know Vincent doesn't like me, but how could he treat Kaley so harshly? If he's upset, he should take it out on me instead..."

Seeing this, Damon quickly comforted her and said with a cold



edge, "What on earth did he do? I won't let him get away with bullying Kaley like that!"

Wiping her tears in an exaggerated manner, Jaylah recounted the incident with a sense of grievance. "I demanded an explanation from the Universe Group for the Wilson family's sake. But what did the CEO of the Universe Group do to Vincent? Not only did he refuse our request, but he also scolded me and Kaley."

Kaley, sobbing, intensified her story. "Uncle, Loraine even threatened me when she left! She told me I was an easy target because I'm not..."

"Don't talk nonsense!" Damon interrupted sharply, his face flushed with anger.

Joseph, worried that Jaylah and Kaley might believe they were treated poorly, had always reminded his sons to treat them kindly.

As Jaylah had anticipated, with the groundwork laid and hearing the exaggerated story, Damon felt a deep revulsion towards the president of the Universe Group.

Damon scowled, his voice dripping with disdain. "How can the CEO of the Universe Group be so arrogant? And Vincent... he's losing it more every day!"

Jaylah, maintaining a calm demeanor, replied softly, "Maybe that's because he's been in the entertainment industry too long, influenced by the wrong crowd, don't you think?"

It was clear who she was insinuating. Continuing to stir the pot, Jaylah added, "I heard that just a few days ago, there was nearly a fatal accident at a Universe Group construction site. They managed to hush it up. There was no news coverage or anything."



She lowered her head, barely concealing a smug grin.

They had orchestrated the construction site accident not just to tarnish Loraine's reputation, but also because Jaylah knew Damon had returned on a government mission to rigorously inspect worker safety and ensure public welfare.

Despite Loraine's efforts to keep the incident under wraps, she couldn't stop Jaylah from going straight to Damon with the story.

Through Jaylah's disparagement, the Universe Group was now seen as a cold-hearted corporation that disregarded human life.

Damon's expression turned icy as he muttered, "I'll handle this and stand up for Kaley."

Meanwhile, Loraine and Marco got back into their car.

Even though the car was odor-free, Loraine's cheeks were flushed with embarrassment.

While they were mid-conversation, a voice suddenly called out to Loraine.

It was Vincent. Vincent's face held a mix of emotions as he bowed deeply, offering a sincere apology. "I'm sorry, Loraine. It's clear now that we, the Wilson family, have made things quite difficult for you today. Thankfully, you're alright."

Loraine was momentarily taken aback by his words. Although she knew Vincent wasn't to blame for the day's events, his mention of "we, the Wilson family" affirmed his intent to protect Kaley and Jaylah.

She couldn't help feeling a twinge of disappointment. If Jaylah and Kaley had succeeded, she would have been the one raped.

Deep down, she understood that no matter how just Vincent

tried to be or how strong their bond was, he was still a part of the Wilson family.

Reluctant to hold him responsible yet unwilling to engage further, Loraine turned away silently, choosing not to respond.

Vincent's anxiety was palpable as he saw her turn away. Just as he was about to speak again, the window rolled up in front of him. Marco then stepped out of the car, approached Vincent with a stern look, and whispered a harsh warning, "Stop with the crocodile tears. Don't think your Wilson family can control everything in Zodiac. Cross me again, and it won't be hard for me to take down your family!"





## Chapter 1020 The Broken Bond

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Vincent watched as Marco's car raced ahead, his brows furrowing deeply until the vehicle vanished from view. His face grew serious, and he bowed his head, lost in contemplation.

He understood that Marco's words weren't mere threats.

Marco's power was undeniably formidable. Despite leaving the Cruz family, as its sole heir, he could reclaim his position at any moment.

Moreover, as the CEO of the Solar Company, he had substantial backing. Anyone from the Cruz family who dared challenge him would pale in comparison.

If one day, the Wilson family truly fell out with Marco or Loraine, Marco would undoubtedly rally the influence of the Cruz family, the Solar Company and even the Universe Group to ruthlessly deal with the Wilson family.

Worry clouded Vincent's eyes. He doubted whether his connection with Loraine could save the family when the time came.

Meanwhile, inside the car, Loraine glanced at the man beside her and hesitated before asking, "What did you do when you stepped out of the car just now?"

Marco replied, "I simply warned him to keep the Wilson family in line, or else I wouldn't hesitate to set them straight."

Loraine couldn't contain her laughter. After a moment, she

sighed, "Vincent isn't a bad person."

Marco subconsciously clenched his fists, his mind flashing back to the scene outside the suburban villa. His gaze darkened.

His reconciliation with Loraine had happened by chance, spurred by the effects of drug, yet the underlying misunderstandings remained unresolved.

Despite feeling jealous, Marco remained silent, expressing his love through actions. He embraced Loraine, planting gentle kisses from her forehead to her eyebrows, asserting his relationship with her.

Loraine gripped the car seat tightly, her breaths deepening under his gentle kisses.

As she closed her eyes, anticipating another kiss, Marco eased his hold and said, "You must be tired. Take a rest."

Loraine's emotions surged and then settled, leaving her with a mixed sense of longing and uncertainty. It was hard to discern if she felt relieved or a twinge of regret.

But she had stopped dwelling on Vincent and instead cast her eyes downward, expressing conflicting feelings, saying, "I need to see Cayson one last time. There's something I must tell him to put an end to his feelings for me."

Though she valued her relationships, Loraine wasn't one to waver in her decisions. Whatever the circumstance, Cayson had to face the consequences of his actions. She would not let it go.

Marco remained silent for a moment before nodding in understanding.

Shortly after, they arrived at a secluded villa. He led Loraine into a basement.

In the chilly, poorly lit space, Cayson huddled in a corner with his back to the door. At the sound of approaching footsteps, he lifted his head, revealing a swollen and apathetic face.

But upon spotting Loraine, Cayson's eyes sparked with excitement. "Lorrie..." he said.

But before he could utter another word, Loraine cut in icily, "Cayson, I'm here to ask you, who is your accomplice tonight?"

Cayson gazed at her, slowly realizing that Loraine hadn't come to rescue him. Instead, she stood there, coldly interrogating him.

He scoffed and slouched against the wall, exuding defeat. "What accomplice? I'm the one who's been wronged! Marco set me up!"

Loraine paused, her voice calm yet tinged with disappointment, saying, "You still deny it? You arranged the dress for me, and you also drugged me. Even though I was dazed by the drug, I still recall what happened."

Cayson hesitated for a moment, then his expression turned fierce as he snarled, "So what if I did? It's all because of you! Lorrie, why can't I compete with Marco?" he bitterly questioned.

Loraine chuckled softly, "Well, at least Marco wouldn't harm me."

Cayson was caught off guard and said dejectedly, "If only you had agreed to be my girlfriend, I would have been the one protecting you."

Loraine shook her head and turned to Marco, questioning, "Marco, if I refuse to be with you, would you get me this way?"

Marco shook his head without hesitation and replied earnestly, "I'll pursue you until you agree, but I won't cause you harm. Your happiness means more to me than anything else."

The burning sensation on Cayson's face wasn't from the wound but from the stinging of his wounded pride.

With clenched teeth, he shot a glare at Marco, rebuking. "Marco, you're nothing but a hypocrite! Lorrie, don't put your trust in him!"

Marco stayed composed, gripping Loraine's hand gently as he said sincerely, "I'd go to any length for this, even if it means sacrificing my life."

Thinking back to the times Marco had risked everything to save her, Loraine's heart fluttered, and she squeezed his hand tighter. Turning to Cayson, she asserted, "I believe him because he's already proven it. And that's the difference between you and him."

Cayson's gaze fixated on the intertwined hands of the two, his eyes blazing with fury. Unable to contain himself any longer, he shouted out of control, "Marco, kill me! Otherwise, I curse you that may you never have Lorrie by your side in this life!"

