

Chapter 1063 Barrette

Their interaction was abruptly interrupted by Michel, causing Marco's expression to darken immediately. He stepped forward, positioning himself protectively in front of Loraine. With a cold squint, he glared at Michel, radiating an intense sense of possessiveness.

Michel snapped back to reality, pulling a face at Marco before quickly regaining his composure. He coughed to clear his throat, lifted his chin proudly, and declared, "Now I admit, you are indeed worthy of being photographed by me."

After witnessing the earlier scene, Loraine couldn't help but see Michel's behavior as somewhat childlike.

She smiled quietly to herself as Michel snorted softly, "But even so, you still seem a bit too plain. I think I'll add a bit more accessories to you..."

His face wore a mischievous grin, reminiscent of a child plotting a prank. Lowering his voice to a teasingly threatening tone, he added, "You should be careful now that you've fallen into my hands!"

Loraine was far from intimidated; in fact, she found the situation amusing.

However, out of respect for the famous photographer's pride, she merely tilted her head slightly to conceal her amusement.

Marco shot a glance at Michel, then reassured Loraine in an awkward tone. "Don't take it to heart. He doesn't mean any harm; these artistic types usually have a unique way about them."

Loraine blinked and, leaning closer to Marco, whispered, "Did you know him before?"

Marco nodded, a hint of amusement in his eyes. "We became friends while I was abroad."

He paused, then added with emphasis, "But if he disrespects you again and it upsets you, be sure to tell me, and I'll have a word with him for you!"

Loraine responded with a light chuckle, "I've heard a bit about his temper before. Don't worry, I won't be bullied."

Because Michel had also photographed Wesley, who had mentioned to Loraine that while Michel had a bad temper, his skills behind the camera were truly exceptional.

Given the challenging times the Universe Group was experiencing, it was a stroke of luck that a renowned photographer like Michel was willing to collaborate on their project.

Loraine suspected Michel's involvement might have more to do with Marco than the company itself.

This thought warmed her heart as she glanced at Marco.

At that moment, Michel pulled a box from his belongings. Observing the pair whispering closely, he teased, "We haven't even started shooting yet, and you two are already so close. You haven't changed yet, Marco. Be careful, she's all made up! If you smudge her makeup, it's on you!"

Marco, caught off guard, shot Michel a cold look, finding him increasingly intolerable.

Unphased, Michel barked, "Stop glaring at me! Go get changed! My time is precious, and if you keep delaying, I might just raise my fees!"

Loraine chuckled, gently nudging the annoyed Marco towards the dressing room. Marco, still frowning, complied but not before warning Michel, "Don't hassle Loraine!"

Once Marco was gone, Michel approached Loraine and opened the jewelry box as if unveiling a treasure. With a smug look, he presented a mistletoe barrette, saying, "I'm using my personal collection for a better shoot. Handle it carefully, okay? It's quite valuable!"

Loraine peered into the box and saw the mistletoe barrette, perfectly suiting the Christmas theme. She had to acknowledge Michel's knack for selecting accessories that enhanced her appearance beautifully.

But... Loraine's expression became pensive, her lips pressed together in silence.

She recognized the barrette.

Turning, she motioned for Remy to approach and quietly gave her a few instructions. Afterward, she took the barrette with a grateful smile and delicately placed it in her hair.

Michel's reaction was one of shock, his eyes widening. "Oh my god! How can you treat it like an ordinary barrette? Do you realize who designed it? This is a globally limited edition of one hundred pieces, personally crafted by Mr. T for Christmas. How could you..."

Watching his almost theatrical dismay, Loraine couldn't help but smile and gently reassure him. "Accessories are meant to be worn, aren't they? If you just store it away like an antique, doesn't that defeat its purpose?"

Michel, looking a bit pale, waved his hand dismissively, convinced that Loraine didn't appreciate the true artistry of the piece, and chose not to press the issue further. Then, he sighed wistfully, "If only we had the matching moose collar pin from

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the same collection, it would make such a striking ensemble. Unfortunately, there's only one set in the world, and Mr. T designed it especially for his most beloved niece."

Just then, Remy returned, holding a jewelry box. Loraine nonchalantly opened it and retrieved the collar pin inside.

Michel was visibly stunned, then leaped up, exclaiming in disbelief, "My goodness! Is that the moose collar pin?"



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Chapter 1064 Christmas Theme

Loraine's serene demeanor contrasted sharply with Michel's shocked expression. With a poised nod and a gentle smile, she confirmed, "Yes."

Michel's jaw plummeted further. He couldn't believe it. Meanwhile, Loraine remained secretly bemused by the man. Her memories drifted back to the moment she received that collar pin.

It all began when she returned to the Torres family. They discovered her and welcomed her back just in time for a reunion before Christmas.

She was fragile and timid then, haunted by the fear of the unfamiliar faces surrounding her. The Torrees, consumed by both concern and anticipation, spared no effort to ease her transition and kindle joy in her troubled heart.

In those tender moments, Wesley, a figure of renown in those circles, crafted a piece of jewelry imbued with the spirit of the season—a unique moose collar pin; Christmas-themed.

Loraine vividly recalled the scene: her wayward Uncle Wesley cradling her as if she were a precious gem, tears glistening in his eyes as he spoke. "I made a wish to Santa to find you, my dear. And here you are, the little princess of the Torres dynasty. This trinket is my promise to you, that your dreams shall find their wings."

Though Loraine had arrived at Zodiac with scant belongings, she carried with her this cherished memento. It was a tangible

link to her past.

She sighed softly, letting the weight of nostalgia settle around her even as Michel grappled with disbelief. After a moment of reflection, he turned to her with a pained expression. "Did you commission a replica set?"

To him, Loraine appeared to be just another starlet, catapulted to fame on the strength of her beauty alone. Or perhaps, it was just a narrative he clung to, as a means of preserving his own convictions.

The more he mulled it over, the more the idea gained traction, growing more reasonable with each passing thought. He nodded with a solemn expression. "I'll never resort to counterfeits! It goes against my professional integrity!"

Loraine snapped back to reality, flashing a grin. "This is the real deal. Legit as they come."

Noticing Michel's skepticism, Loraine hesitated for a beat before confessing, "Mr. T is my uncle."

While Wesley's connection to her wasn't exactly a secret, Loraine never felt the need to flaunt it or ride on the coattails of her elders.

Up until now, Michel had been clueless about her background. Her revelation left him incredulous. "How is that even possible?" he blurted out.

Loraine's smile took on a sly edge as she replied at a leisurely pace, "He mentioned you always had airs about you whenever he collaborated with you. 'An arrogant young man,' was his exact phrase."

Michel's facade crumbled. "He really said that?" he exclaimed, disbelief written all over his face.

The idea of leaving a less-than-stellar impression on his idol rattled him. He fidgeted nervously, his face flushing red. "I... I was younger back then! I truly admire Mr. T, but I didn't want to come off as childish, so I put up a front."

Loraine couldn't hold back her laughter, finding Michel's reaction utterly priceless. Finally able to wrap his head around Loraine's true identity, Michel couldn't help but pry for more information about Wesley.

As the two conversed, Marco emerged from the tent, sporting a new outfit.

Loraine's gaze lingered on him, taken aback by his transformation.

Both were dressed in festive Christmas attire, but Marco, typically inclined towards cooler colors, was now adorned in a vibrant red fit for the first time.

With his tall, statuesque frame and chiseled features, he resembled an ancient Greek deity in Santa's clothing.

If Santa Claus looked half as divine as him, chimney-climbing would be every girl's fantasy.

Michel's playful whistle and wink to Loraine broke the moment. "Your Santa has arrived. Time to hustle," he teased.

A blush crept onto Loraine's cheeks as she stole a glance at Marco.

Marco could sense her shyness so he decided to bridge the gap. He approached her, gently taking her hand in his. His gaze then flicked over to Michel, a hint of frostiness in his tone as he commanded, "Time to get down to business. No time for fooling around."

Michel responded with a nonchalant smile, swiftly instructing



his assistant to prepare for the shooting phase.

As the shoot commenced, Michel immersed himself completely in his work, shedding any hint of frivolity. He approached the task with meticulous seriousness, skillfully capturing each shot and occasionally offering guidance to the couple.

However, after snapping a few photos, he paused, a furrow forming on his brow. Despite the images looking impressive, a nagging sense of dissatisfaction gnawed at him.

He rubbed his chin thoughtfully as he observed Marco and Loraine. He noticed that whenever they drew closer, their interactions elicited admiring glances tinged with envy from the staff, subtly restraining their natural rapport.

He cut to the chase, his words blunt yet perceptive. "Are you two complete strangers? Come on, Marco, let's see some real connection here. Give her a little hug. You're a couple, right? So why the hesitation? Or have you not even held hands yet?"

At Michel's prompting, both Marco and Loraine found themselves lost in romantic fantasies simultaneously, cheeks flushing with embarrassment. With a subtle cough, Marco seized the opportunity to envelop Loraine in his arms, his gaze softening as he sought to ease her nerves.

As Marco's gaze locked with hers, Loraine felt her heartbeat quicken, momentarily forgetting the demands of the shoot.

Marco, too, felt a surge of emotion, his voice catching in his throat as he leaned in closer.

Their breath mingled, and he uttered her name in a husky whisper.

