

Chapter 1131 Gathering

Loraine was surprised as she recognized Ariadna's voice on the other end of the phone. She quickly asked, "Ariadna, where are you?"

Over the last few days, she, along with Marco's men, had been tirelessly searching for Ariadna. Despite their efforts, they hadn't been able to find her. Aria had assured them she was safe. Busy with work and preparing for her wedding, Loraine then forgot about the search.

Now, with Ariadna's call, Loraine sensed that something was off. The Cruz family, Solar Company, and Universe Group had all been looking for Ariadna. And here was Ariadna, contacting her? How was Ariadna managing all this on her own?

She must have had help from someone!

Loraine felt uneasy. Was the person helping Ariadna a friend or an enemy?

And to her, Ariadna seemed just like a little girl. Who would assist a kid in hiding and running away from home?

On the other end, Ariadna's voice was cheerful and normal. She said, "I'm fine, Lorrie. I told you I'm safe. I have stayed at my friend's place recently. I called because I miss you."

Hearing this, Loraine composed herself. Just as she

normal. She said, "I'm fine, Lorrie. I told you I'm safe. I have stayed at my friend's place recently. I called because I miss you."

Hearing this, Loraine composed herself. Just as she was about to persuade Ariadna to disclose her location, Ariadna shifted the conversation playfully, saying, "Lorrie, do you know why I like you so much?"

"Why?" Loraine genuinely wanted to know.

"When I was a child, I lost my mother so early that I barely remember her. My dad was wonderful, but he was always busy and seldom around. Tillie was the one who was always there..."

After a brief pause, Ariadna continued, "But I felt like I was just another responsibility to her. Lorrie, you're the only one who treats me nice and looks after me."

Loraine's heart melted. She said softly, "I understand your feelings."

She glanced at Wesley with a pleading smile. Understanding her signal, he stood up and left the room.

"Ariadna... Like you, I missed out on maternal affection in my youth, but my family cherished me greatly. I later met many friends who became like family. If you want, they can be your friends too. Do you still recall Jennie? I have mentioned her before. She's in Zodiac right now. I've been wanting to introduce you two for a long time. Just let me know where you are, and I'll come get you, alright?"

Ariadna was quiet for a moment, then resisted the bait. She simply said, "Lorrie, I miss you."

Loraine sighed quietly to herself and shifted the subject, asking, "Okay then. Marco and I are getting engaged. Can you join us?"

Ariadna was pleasantly surprised and said with a smile, "Sure! I promise I'll be there. I'm safe. Don't worry!"

With her assurances, Loraine found herself unable to say anything more to convince her. She smiled with a hint of helplessness, stressing to Ariadna to stay safe and to call immediately if anything went wrong.

Just after Loraine ended the call, she received a message from Jennie. It read, "Lorrie, are you and Marco free? Want to hang out? Jimmie and I have booked a private room and are waiting for you!"

Loraine pondered for a moment and then accepted. She had wrapped up all her work at the company for the day and had no other plans. Moreover, it had been a long time since she last saw Jennie.

After informing Rowan and Wesley, she and Marco headed to the location Jennie had provided.

In the private room, Jimmie and Jennie were deep in conversation. As soon as Loraine opened the door, Jennie quickly pushed Jimmie aside, ran over to Loraine, and embraced her tightly, saying, "Lorrie, I miss you so much!"

Loraine looked at her and said with a smile, "It seems you're too busy to spend time with me, but you always find time for your boyfriend."

Jennie gave a cough of embarrassment, pulled Loraine aside, and began to vent.

Left on his own, Jimmie gave a wry smile and consciously sat next to Marco. He sighed and said, "It

seems we're forgotten as soon as they meet each other."

Marco looked at him coldly and said, "You two were the ones who invited us for drinks."

Otherwise, he would have enjoyed being alone with Loraine right now.

Jimmie tapped his nose awkwardly and said with a smile, "Well, I have a surprise for you."

Right after he finished talking, the door swung open. Slater strolled in, settled between them, uncorked a bottle of wine, and took a sip. Then, he shot Marco a glare.

"You jerk! Are we friends or what? Why didn't you tell me about your engagement?"

Marco raised his eyebrows in surprise upon seeing Slater here.

Jimmie intervened, "Marco's been really busy lately, and they've only just set the date..."


Slater scoffed, still dissatisfied with the explanation. Marco chuckled and asked, "What brings you here?"

"Well, both of you are here. So, my dad sent me here. He told me to either make something of myself in business or find myself a wife!"

Jimmie grinned and teased, "Then you should concentrate on your career."

Slater hesitated for a moment, then expressed his

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discontent, saying, "Women find me attractive, alright?"

He then stood up, opened the door, and returned shortly with a woman and said, "Meet my girlfriend!"

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Chapter 1132 Slater's Girlfriend

The presence of Slater's girlfriend surprised everyone in the room. Loraine and Jennie looked at the newcomer with curiosity.

The woman was dressed simply yet elegantly, appearing quite charming. She scanned the room with wide, sparkling eyes, appearing slightly timid. She fidgeted with her fingertips nervously. Upon locking eyes with Loraine, she quickly lowered her head, resembling a scared deer.

With a raised eyebrow, Jennie whispered just loud enough for Loraine to hear, "She seems a bit pretentious."

Loraine gave her a look, signaling her to keep her thoughts to herself.

Slater took the woman's hand and positioned her behind him, lifting his chin with pride as he introduced her, "This is Trudy Murray. She's really kind. Try not to frighten her, especially you, Marco!"

Marco simply looked at him and remained silent.

Trudy, clutching Slater's hand, appeared distinctly uneasy.

Jennie couldn't stand people who were fake like that. She clenched her teeth, wanting to say something

sarcastic, but Loraine stopped her, so she had to bite her tongue.

Jimmie, unable to resist commenting, said, "At the Cruz family's banquet in Vagow, you mentioned you'd bring a date. Is this her?"

Slater's expression darkened instantly. He glared at Jimmie, gritted his teeth, and said, "Jimmie, don't bring that up again, or I won't speak to you! Anyway, Trudy is my girlfriend now!"

Jimmie merely shrugged and returned to his drink.

Tension filled the private room all of a sudden. Trudy seemed to sense it too. She retreated behind Slater and started crying softly.

Loraine and Jennie shared puzzled looks, confused by Trudy's behavior.

Given that Slater was a close friend of both Marco and Jimmie, and they were all together, Loraine and Jennie wanted to lift Trudy's spirits.

They invited Trudy to join them.

Noticing Trudy's anxiety and shaking, Loraine asked, "Would you like a cocktail?"

Upon hearing this, Trudy trembled visibly, seemingly terrified by the suggestion. She curled up on the sofa and murmured through her tears, "I'm sorry. My family is very strict. They don't allow me to drink."

She then looked up at Slater with a pitiful expression.

Witnessing this, Jennie frowned in disgust and said bluntly, "So why even come to the bar? You're making it seem like we're picking on you."

Overhearing the conversation, Slater turned around to see Trudy biting her lip and crying. He walked over, fixed Jennie with a stern look, and said sharply, "Why are you being so mean? Do you think everyone is as tough as you?"

Caught off guard, Jennie pointed to herself and felt irritation. She slammed her glass down on the table and hissed, "I'm tough? Slater, it seems like you're the one causing trouble today. You're being completely unreasonable!"

Slater was furious. "You're the one being unreasonable! You..."

Marco and Jimmie exchanged glances, both frowning. Jimmie then stepped up to intervene, rubbing his temple as he asked, "Why are you fighting here? Isn't this unnecessary?"

Meanwhile, Marco stood next to Loraine, turned to Slater, and asked, "What's going on?"

Loraine didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the situation.

Gazing at the nervous Trudy, she said calmly, "I simply offered Miss Murray a cocktail."

Trudy said timidly, "I'm... I'm sorry. I've never been to a place like this, and you seemed quite intense. I thought..."

Upon hearing this, Jennie burst out laughing in frustration. She kicked the table, muttered a curse under her breath, turned, and stormed out.

Slater was about to explode in anger when he noticed Jimmie giving him a cold look. Jimmie then followed Jennie out.

Slater said angrily, "Jimmie, we've been friends for years, and you choose her over me?"

He looked expectantly at Marco, hoping for his support. However, Marco simply turned to Loraine and whispered, "I trust you."

Loraine felt a warmth spread through her heart at his words. She smiled softly and said, "Should we go then?"

Marco nodded, and they left together.

Slater's eyes widened with fury. He angrily kicked the sofa and said, "Fine! You're all getting on my nerves! Maybe I shouldn't have thought of you as my friends!"

Next to him, Trudy wrapped her arms around his shoulders and said pitifully, "Slater, don't be mad. They clearly don't care about you. Don't let them get to you."

Outside the bar, Loraine reflected on the evening's events and still found them absurd.

Upon reconsideration, she felt slightly guilty for spoiling the reunion. She turned to Marco, ready to explain.

Marco shook his head and cut her off, "No need to

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explain. I believe you. It's not because you are my girlfriend. I believe in your character."

Loraine was at a loss for words. After a pause, she frowned and said, "Trudy seems a bit odd. I don't quite like her."

Narrowing his eyes, Marco soon recalled how, before their divorce, Keely feigned injury and falsely accused Loraine.

Trudy brought back memories of Keely.

He squeezed Loraine's hand and said reassuringly, "Don't worry. I'll have someone look into Trudy."

Chapter 1133 It Was Him

At first, Loraine didn't take Trudy seriously, but after returning home, she was bombarded with messages from Jennie.

Jennie had planned to have a good get-together with her today, but now, the plan had not only been ruined, but she and Slater also had a quarrel. Given her temperament, she naturally couldn't tolerate such a disappointment. She had never minced words even when speaking to Loraine, and this time was no different. She made it clear just how angry and displeased she was.

Knowing how upset Jennie was, Loraine responded with sympathy and patiently comforted her. But just then, she got a new friend request.

Loraine clicked on it and found that it was from Ariadna.

She thought for a moment before accepting it.

Ariadna then sent her a message, explaining that this was her new account and began to chat with her.

Meanwhile, Jennie was still full of emotion and continued to send long text messages to Loraine. One could imagine just how furious she looked as she typed away on her phone.

Loraine responded to both of them separately for a while, until she began to feel a bit exhausted. So she

simply put the three of them into a group chat.

Jennie was initially confused and halted typing her complaint in the group chat. Loraine then introduced Ariadna to her.

Ariadna responded with a polite greeting to the other two while Jennie replied kindly and continued to vent.

"What a dumb ass that man is! I really don't know how Jimmie has managed to be friends with him for so many years. Lorrie, do you think he's got a screw loose in his head? He claimed I'm tough, but I think he's clueless! Out of all three of them, he's the most incompetent one, yet he has the guts to judge me! Really, I'm done putting up with him."

Ariadna was shocked by Jennie's anger, and she couldn't help but privately ask Loraine what was going on. Loraine went ahead to explain everything to her, and Ariadna immediately concurred with Jennie and tried to comfort her.

Jennie had heard Loraine talk about Ariadna before. Seeing her act so well-behaved and understanding, in contrast to Trudy, she became a lot more comfortable with her.

"Ariadna, you're such a lovely lady," she praised her. "When we eventually meet in person, I'll give you a gift. Love ya!"

Ariadna sent a shy emoji, and then she asked curiously, "What's the name of the person that you've been talking about?"

"His name is Slater Lee," Jennie promptly replied. "He's

a complete and utter fool. Just steer clear of him if you ever come across him in the future, sweetie."

Ariadna's heart skipped a beat when she saw the familiar name.

Slater Lee? Was it the same person she knew?

Memories of their encounters at the bar in Vagow instantly came to her mind, and she gasped in shock.

She never expected that Slater would know Marco and Loraine, and she never expected that he would be said to be such a person!

And... he even had a girlfriend already?

Ariadna just didn't know what to think or feel. After a long while, she replied to Jennie with an "Okay", and then turned to her contact list to search for someone. When she found the contact she was looking for, she hesitated for a while before sending a message: "Hello, can you help me get Slater Lee's contact information?"

Without any questions, the person on the other end quickly replied by sending a phone number.

Ariadna trusted her source, so she had no doubt that this number was Slater's.

After dialing the number, she waited with trepidation as she listened to it ringing. On the third ring, the call was connected, and a familiar voice said in an impatient tone, "Hello. Who is this?"

Ariadna took a deep breath and whispered, "It's me. Aria."

"What do you want?" Slater demanded in an angry tone. "Do you want to play tricks on me again? Let me remind you that I'm not a fool!"

Ariadna became a bit flustered and quickly tried to calm him down by explaining, "I didn't mean to stand you up. I just couldn't get out at the time."

But since she was totally unaware of the messages that Clifford had sent to Slater, she didn't know that this explanation was useless to him.

"Do whatever you like," he sneered. "It has nothing to do with me anymore. If you have nothing else to say, I'll hang up right now."

Ariadna was not very eloquent or self-confident, so Slater's tone only made her anxious. In her panic, she blurted out without thinking, "I'm pregnant with your child!"

For a moment, there was complete silence on the other end of the line.

"If you're in Zodiac, can you come see me?" Ariadna asked.

Meanwhile, on the other side, Slater's mouth hung open in shock. It took a moment before he finally said, "I saved you, yes, but I've never touched you."

Ariadna felt wronged and she quickly reminded him, "That time at the bar when you were drunk, though I left in a hurry, I actually left behind a note and a keepsake for you."

When Slater heard this, he sneered. When he found Trudy, she had mentioned that someone had asked about what they had done at the bar back then.

Now, he realized exactly what was going on. "Come on," he scoffed dismissively, "even if I was drunk, I wouldn't have had sex with you! You got yourself knocked up by some guy, and now you want me to take the fall? For crying out loud, I'm not a fool!"

"In fact, I really regret saving you back then!" he added in anger.

Then he hung up. But he still didn't feel satisfied, so he blocked her.

Tears were rolling down Ariadna's face, but she didn't give up. She tried to call him back, but she found that she had been blocked.

She became very emotional, and began to experience a shortness of breath. Before long, she fainted. The last words she heard as she passed out were those of the nearby nurse exclaiming, "Oh my God! She's about to give birth!"