

Chapter 1201 A Blank Invitation

After discussing the details, Marco and Rowan stepped out of the room together. Just then, they encountered Loraine.

She looked a bit surprised to see them together. "What were you two talking about?"

Rowan, who was not accustomed to deception, tensed slightly.

Marco quickly stepped in, smiling. "I was just sharing your invitation designs with Rowan. I'm sure he and Wesley will want to keep them as souvenirs from our engagement party."

Rowan chimed in, "Yes, Lorrie, I heard you might send one to your grandpa? Then Wesley and I would love one too."

Loraine smiled warmly. "Of course, Uncle Rowan. I'll make sure to prepare two special invitations just for you and Uncle Wesley."

Rowan's smile broadened, pleased with the cover story, and he genuinely desired the invitation.

He thought to himself that Wesley, still away on business, would appreciate his efforts in securing an invitation.

Loraine then turned to Marco. "Marco, who else are you thinking of inviting?"

Considering the Bryant family's downfall and the fact that he likely wouldn't invite the Cruz family, Loraine awaited his reply.

Marco paused before responding, "I think I'll just invite my close friends and Carl, who has always been by my side."

Loraine nodded, then added, "I'd like to keep it small as well. Besides my Uncle Rowan, Uncle Wesley, and grandpa, I think only Jennie, Ariadna, and Vincent will be invited."

She reflected on her promise to Vincent and their good relationship, which solidified her decision to include him on the guest list.

Loraine decided not to invite other members of the Wilson family, holding a particular grudge against Joseph for disrupting their previous engagement party.

Despite their wealth and high status, which typically attracted numerous acquaintances, they maintained a small circle of close friends and relatives.

Marco silently held her hand, appreciating her acceptance of his flaws.

Loraine then returned to her task of designing unique invitations. After completing them, she handed the invitations to Marco to distribute to his chosen guests.

Suddenly, Marco seemed thoughtful. "Could I have one more invitation?" he asked quietly.

Puzzled, Loraine looked at him as he explained, "I'd like to give one to Jorge."

At first, Loraine was taken aback by the unfamiliar name, but then she recalled Marco mentioning him before.

Marco, now open about everything with her, shared Jorge's story more fully.

"Jorge, along with Jimmie and Slater, were my childhood friends. We had a pact that we'd each get an invitation to the others' weddings, no matter what. Jorge died saving my life... During our previous marriage plans, I visited his grave to tell him about it. This time, I want to honor that promise more formally."

Hearing Marco's plan to honor Jorge, Loraine was momentarily taken aback, particularly by the revelation that Marco had previously informed Jorge about their marriage. The depth of Marco's commitment to his friendships left her with mixed emotions.

Jorge's selfless act had clearly earned him an enduring place in Marco's heart, which helped Loraine understand Marco's past tolerance towards Keely.

Reflecting on Keely's situation, Loraine realized she no longer harbored strong feelings about the past. She felt a sense of gratitude towards Jorge for his sacrifice.

Loraine then took out a blank invitation, carefully penned the necessary details, and solemnly passed it to Marco.

"You should add his name yourself. Jorge would be thrilled to know we're together!"

After sharing his memories, Marco felt a weight lift from his shoulders. Touched by Loraine's thoughtfulness, he embraced her warmly.

He nestled against her, savoring the moment, before softly announcing his plans.

"I need to go back to Vagow. I'll be back in two days. I won't keep you waiting."

Assuming he intended to visit Jorge's grave with the invitation, Loraine supported his decision without hesitation.

The following morning, she accompanied him to the airport to bid him farewell.

Though it was just a brief separation, Loraine felt a pang of reluctance as she watched Marco walk towards the departure gate.

She caught up with him, embraced him tightly, and said, "Since you're going back to Vagow, could you please visit my grandpa for me?"

Marco returned her embrace with equal firmness and gently promised. "I will."

Chapter 1202 Visiting Aldo

The plane touched down, and Marco found himself back in Vagow.

Without Loraine, the city lost its charm for him.

He anticipated a flood of memories about his past with Bryant family, yet nothing stirred within him.

It felt like just another business trip, him merely a passerby.

Focused and undistracted, Marco made his way directly to the Torres family estate.

The mansion retained its understated, old-world allure, but in Loraine's absence, it seemed different—less vibrant.

Even the garden, usually pristine, showed signs of neglect, the flowers not as vibrant as before.

Upon ringing the doorbell, the servant who greeted him nearly burst with surprise, but Marco quickly calmed her down.

After inquiring about Aldo's location, Marco proceeded to find him, his emotions mixed.

He found Aldo in the chess room, a familiar haunt from their past games. The old man sat cross-legged, a chess piece in hand, his posture bent as he contemplated his next move in a solitary game.

The scene of Aldo playing alone lent a touch of solitude to the room.

Marco approached, glanced at the chessboard, and placed a white piece, injecting life into the game.

Aldo's face lit up with the move, then he looked up, surprised and somewhat startled.

"You, why are you here now? Is Lorrie with you? Did she come back too?" he asked, his voice tinged with hope as he peered behind Marco.

Marco responded gently, "Aldo, it's just me this time. Lorrie stayed in Zodiac. I had some matters to handle here, so I came to see you first."

Aldo's expression showed a mix of disappointment and joy. "I don't need you checking up on me! What business could you possibly have in Vagow? Did the Cruz family send you away? Or is there trouble at your company?"

Marco laughed off the old man's pointed remarks, settling across from him on the floor. "I just missed playing chess with you, so I came back for a game."

At that, Aldo's mustache twitched with amusement, and he eagerly set up the board for a new game.

The chess room soon echoed with laughter, and not long after, Aldo triumphantly declared, "I win!"

Marco chuckled, praising him for his chess prowess, causing Aldo to laugh even more heartily. The servants exchanged knowing smiles, while the kitchen quietly prepared the meal.

As dinnertime neared, Aldo summoned the butler to the chess room, frowning as he remarked, "Why is there so much food? I wasn't expecting to have my meal with Marco, but well, we can't let it go to waste. Marco, you must stay for

dinner!"

Marco exchanged a knowing glance with the butler and smiled, accepting the invitation.

The warmth and joviality of the Torres family always made Marco feel at home. It was easy to see why Loraine was so endearing with a family like this.

After dinner, Marco took a moment to present Aldo with an invitation that Loraine had crafted herself.

Aldo's eyes welled up as he held the invitation.

He had already learned of their engagement directly from Loraine, and felt a mixture of joy for her and regret that his health barred him from attending.

Marco then asked, "Aldo, would you like to attend the engagement party?"

Initially excited, Aldo became contemplative, eventually saying, "I appreciate the thought, but I know my limits. I can barely walk around my own backyard without the butler fussing over me. How could I possibly travel to Zodiac?"

Marco smiled reassuringly. "If you're willing, there's a way. I came to tell you about a new technology developed by Solar Company..."

After Marco explained the details, Aldo's enthusiasm was evident. "I'm willing to try it!"

Marco had the butler bring out a helmet he'd previously shipped and placed it on Aldo. He then called Rowan, who was ready in Zodiac, and instructed him to initiate the system.

Half an hour later, Marco ended the call. Aldo removed the helmet, his face alight with curiosity and excitement.

Marco gestured for silence with a finger to his lips, smiling. "Aldo, we agreed to keep this a surprise for Lorrie."

Aldo, his eyes twinkling mischievously, mimed zipping his lips and smiled broadly. "You've thought of everything. I'll definitely be there!"