

## Chapter 1249 Confronting Clifford

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In the study of the Cruz family's house, Clifford sat in Melvin's former seat, running his hands over the desk with a mix of obsession and contentment evident in his eyes and a smile on his face.

At first, he had felt uneasy and frightened after poisoning Melvin. But now those feelings were gone. Embracing the changes power brought, he grew convinced of the decisions he had made.

He was the right person to lead the Cruz family. Soon, he would make those die-hard forces surrender to him, thereby gaining control over the entire Cruz family!

Melvin would perish alone in the hospital.

No one would discover his deeds. Once Melvin was gone, he would be completely relieved.

His smile widened as he glanced at a contract on the desk.

This contract bolstered his confidence. Though Jorge hadn't yet agreed to join forces, their conversation at the party showed promising signs of agreement.

Reflecting on their discussions, Clifford sensed the Riley family's strength exceeded his initial estimates and might rival, or even surpass, the Wilson family.

He scoffed proudly, "Marco, even if you have Solar Company, so what? Once I align with the Riley family, I'll dominate the

domestic market swiftly! By then, Solar Company might not even survive. Even if the Wilson family supports you, I won't be concerned!"

Suddenly, a subordinate rushed into the study, visibly panicked and neglecting to knock. Clifford's frown deepened as he prepared to reprimand the man, who hastily interjected, "Mr. Cruz, Marco is here!"

His subordinates already viewed him as the family's leader.

Clifford's gaze darkened slightly, asserting his authority as head of the family. After a moment's reflection, he relaxed abruptly and smiled. "Seems he's agitated by rumors of my alliance with the Riley family. He's likely here to concede."

His subordinate paled, voice trembling. "But... It seems he's here to confront you..."

Clifford's heart skipped a beat. Just as he began to respond, Marco entered.

Marco arrived with his bodyguards. The Cruz family's servants hesitated to intercept him, intimidated yet wary of Clifford's potential reprisal, so they surrounded him tentatively.

Evidently, Marco wasn't here to concede.

Clifford's demeanor remained unchanged. He pondered that he had already handled the security footage and instructed the servants who knew he had spent time in the study that day. Even if Marco intended to accuse him, there was no evidence.

Confident, he smiled insincerely. "Marco, have you decided to return and assist in managing the Cruz family?"

Days earlier, he had offered Marco leadership, promising support. Now, he gave up his pretense.

Marco sneered, then asked calmly without answering his

question, "Would you like to explain exactly what happened that day?"

Clifford feigned ignorance of Marco's meaning while the latter glanced at his subordinate.

Marco's subordinate nodded, turned around, and clapped his hands. Soon, several elders of the Cruz family were escorted forward by Marco's bodyguards. They glared at Clifford as if they knew something.

Witnessing this, Clifford inquired, "What's with the looks on your faces? Melvin fell ill and was hospitalized because of Marco. I've been tirelessly serving the Cruz family in Melvin's absence! Are you trying to falsely accuse me based on that brat's lies?"

Anticipating Clifford's defense, Marco sneered and gestured to his subordinate to play the surveillance footage.

Clifford's facade crumbled. He stared in disbelief at the video, panic flashing across his face.

Why did Marco possess the surveillance footage? He already destroyed it!

Clifford was seized by panic. Suddenly, a realization dawned on him, igniting a surge of anger.

Forcing himself to regain composure, he asserted firmly, "This is fabricated! Marco, how dare you use fake surveillance footage against me?"

Clifford assumed that Melvin had a backup of the surveillance footage. He never imagined Melvin could thwart him even while hospitalized!

Clifford's eyes blazed with intensity, yet he projected sincerity to the gathering. "You all know how devoted I am to Melvin. With

him sick, I haven't had a moment to spare for anything, even delaying the search for my daughter. Why would I stoop to harm my brother?"

The enraged elders hesitated, casting suspicious glances at Marco upon hearing Clifford's defense. At that moment, a police siren wailed outside, and the butler rushed in, panic-stricken. "There are lot police officers at the door!"

The unexpected turn stunned everyone. Marco spoke calmly. "The police will decide the authenticity of the video."

## Chapter 1250 Justice Served

Marco's words made it evident to everyone that he was the one who informed the police.

One of the elders of the Cruz family, visibly upset and his face twitching with anger, said, "Marco, you've crossed a line! This is a Cruz family issue. You invited us here to resolve it and we promised justice. Why would you get the police involved in this? Do you want our family to be mocked?"

Marco looked at him with a cold gaze. "Melvin, my father, has been poisoned and is now in the hospital. As his son, is it not my right to seek justice for him?"

The elder found himself without words for a moment, then tried to soften his approach. "You're being too stubborn. That's not what we meant..."

Marco stood his ground. "I'm not sure what you meant. With doubts about the surveillance footage's authenticity, turning it over to the police seems like the fairest and most reasonable choice."

He gave a slight smirk. "Unless you think the Cruz family is capable of hiding a case of murder within the family from the public. Do you believe handling this behind closed doors will spare us any humiliation?"

"You... you..." The elder angrily waved his hand in dismissal, struggling to find the right words. "Do what you want. We won't get involved in your issues with your uncle!"

Clifford, who was nearby, felt a chill. His eyelids flickered uncontrollably as he listened to the elders pulling away from

the situation, which increased his anxiety.

Marco's decision to call the police was utterly unexpected!

Wealthy families typically resolve their disputes far from the public eye, which was why Clifford remained composed even though he knew Marco had the surveillance footage.

If the matter were settled within the family, he had several strategies to influence the elders.

For the benefit of everyone, they would hide his crime despite knowing the truth.

Yet, Marco chose not to follow the established rules!

Clifford was aware that if the police got involved, he would be cornered with no way out, especially since he believed the surveillance video was real.

He was familiar with Melvin's cunning tactics and assumed that Melvin probably had a hidden backup camera in his study.

Clifford paused for a moment, then discreetly shifted his stance, giving his men a subtle cue with his eyes.

He was desperate to get away!

Under no circumstances could he allow himself to be caught by the police. Once he was free, he could rely on Mr. K to reverse his fortunes!

Marco, who was carefully watching Clifford, caught on to his subtle cues.

In a flash, Marco rushed at Clifford, who reacted with a fierce counterattack, seemingly set on taking Marco down.

Their men quickly joined the scene, plunging the area into immediate chaos.

Soon, Marco overpowered Clifford, pinning him down securely.

At that moment, several police officers made their way through the crowd and handcuffed Clifford.

One officer showed his badge and said firmly, "Mr. Clifford Cruz, you're under arrest for suspected poisoning and attempted murder. Come with us."

Clifford, seething with anger, struggled and shot a poisonous look at Marco. "Nicely done, Marco. Just like Melvin, cold and ruthless. You'll be the downfall of the Cruz family!"

Marco responded calmly, "Sometimes, destruction is necessary for rebuilding. The Cruz family needs change."

He then turned to the elders, who appeared both angry and helpless, and said clearly, "The one who has really brought shame to our family with his evil deeds is Clifford, not me."

Clifford shouted angrily, "You and your father are heartless monsters! You will face your punishment! Just like your father, you'll lose everything you cherish and never find joy!"

Marco's face hardened as he glared back at Clifford.

Realizing he had hit a sensitive spot, Clifford erupted into hysterical laughter, doubling over and coughing while tears rolled down his cheeks. He looked up at Marco, his smile still laced with malice, and said, "So what if you catch me? Melvin will die soon, and there's nothing you can do to save him!"

He seemed to completely lose control, hurling threats recklessly. "Not just him. You and everyone you hold dear will die. My dear nephew, your arrogance blinds you. You have no clue about the powers you're confronting! So, allow me to warn you, the one targeting you will not spare you. Just wait and see!"

## Chapter 1251 Taking Over The Cruz Family

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Clifford's words sounded like the incoherent hysterics of someone that had been driven to desperation, but Marco did not take them lightly at all. He had a grave expression on his face as he pondered Clifford's words.

Those words indicated that there was in fact a mysterious and powerful force behind the scenes targeting Marco; a force that was strong enough to even manipulate Clifford.

Clifford's act of poisoning was quite peculiar. Marco knew that he was an ambitious and rebellious character, but also timid and extremely fearful of Melvin. So, was his bold move to carry out this poisoning truly due to his anger over the fact that Melvin failed to locate Ariadna, or was he instigated and directed by someone?

At this point, Clifford suddenly burst out laughing in satisfaction as if his purpose had been to be a thorn in Marco's heart. Then he squared his shoulders and said to the police officer who was holding him, "I can walk on my own!"

After Clifford had been taken away by the police, the clan elders seemed to regain their senses and they exchanged glances filled with veiled intentions.

They were just a branch of the main family, and relied heavily on the protection of the Cruz family to continue living their comfortable and affluent lives. Right now, it was clear that Clifford was doomed. They were shrewd enough to not risk offending Marco by standing up for Clifford.



As for Melvin, no one could say what would become of him. The only one who could lead the Cruz family at the moment was Marco.

After a while, the elders reached a consensus and their representative said to Marco in a friendly tone, "Marco, the most important thing right now is to ensure that the Cruz family is stable. Melvin is still in a coma, and as his son, you have to lead the Cruz family."

But Marco did not respond immediately. He was still pondering Clifford's words. The elders, recalling the statement he made at the hospital saying that he didn't want to return to the Cruz family, thought that he did not agree to lead the family. As a result, they began trying to persuade him all at the same time until it became like a chorus.

"Marco, we stood behind you when you wanted to deal with Clifford. For crying out loud, you can't just ignore the Cruz family now!"

"Now, you have to shoulder the responsibility, Marco."

Even the man who had blamed Marco for calling the police changed his attitude and pledged to support his action against Clifford.

Marco sneered inwardly, but outwardly, in a tone filled with indifference, he stated, "I will take over the Cruz family."

At least, until Melvin woke up from the coma, he would be in charge of the Cruz family and manage it properly.

The elders sighed in relief when they heard this, and then began to discuss together in hushed tones. "We have to immediately address the impact of these negative news stories and let the public know that the Cruz family is not in chaos and that the business remains unaffected."

After discussing for several minutes, they agreed on a plan and relayed it back to Marco, "You need to host a banquet in the name of the Cruz family. Our business partners will be invited to the banquet so you can give them some reassurance in order to restore our reputation and status."

Marco did not reject this idea. He knew it was the fastest and most effective means of solving the problem, and it would also serve to appease the members within the Cruz family.

The man who had previously criticized Marco said at this point, "Unfortunately, Ariadna is not here. It's not good for the family to not have a woman who can help in decision making. Since my daughter is acquainted with those affluent ladies in Zodiac, I would like her to help you manage the family."

The moment they heard this, the other elders began to also recommend their own daughters or daughters-in-law. But Marco knew very well that they were not offering to help, rather they were trying to seize the opportunity to gain some power from the Cruz family and get some benefits for themselves.

Nevertheless, he acted like he didn't know their intentions. Instead, he said to them, "Don't worry about that. I will ask Loraine to help me."

Some of them wanted to object, but Marco quickly silenced them by pointing out, "Loraine and I are already engaged. If I return to the Cruz family, only she can be my wife. Moreover, even though the Wilson family has not widely publicized it, most of the people in the high society of Zodiac already know by now that Loraine is a member of the Wilson family. Creating a strong alliance with the Wilson family would undoubtedly help stabilize the Cruz family's current chaos."

The elders were left speechless by this explanation. They wanted to argue, but since they still needed to rely on Marco, they had no choice but to hold their tongues. In the end, they simply reminded Marco to start preparing for the banquet

before finally taking their leave.

Now that he had finished with the elders, Marco returned to his room. After looking around at the place that once held him captive, he let out a deep sigh and picked up his phone so he could contact Loraine to update her on the situation.

Loraine was surprised when she heard that he had the police arrest Clifford. "I thought you would use a more mild approach to make Clifford admit his guilt," she said with a sigh.

"But Melvin can't hold on for that long," Marco pointed out. "If this issue is not resolved quickly, the medical team of Solar Company won't be able to do their job, and Melvin would be in great danger."

Loraine kept quiet for a moment. Then she said, "Okay. I'll pass this on to Ariadna later."

"And there is one more thing, Loraine," Marco said in a softer tone. "I hope you'll help me plan the Cruz family banquet, since you're my future wife."

## Chapter 1252 Gossip Spreads Again

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"Since you're my future wife."

Marco's deep, resonant voice rang in Loraine's ears. She had goosebumps all over her body. A blush flamed her cheeks when she heard the word 'wife'.

"Why do you want to hold a banquet all of a sudden?" she whispered.

Upon finishing her question, Loraine immediately realized why he was doing so. Clifford had been arrested, Melvin was in a coma, and his condition was critical. The news would certainly influence the public's perception of the Cruz family and impact their family business. Therefore, it was crucial to hold a banquet to showcase the Cruz family's strength and reassure their partners.

Loraine was surprised that Marco would be the one organizing the banquet and that he wanted her to assist him. Normally, Marco wouldn't engage in matters like these.

Marco explained that the banquet was the idea of elderly clan members. Loraine readily agreed, saying, "Don't worry, I'll definitely help you handle this. I'll make sure those people with hidden agendas don't look down on us!"

Loraine now found Marco's decision to involve the police a right move. If he had not acted decisively, punishing Clifford would have posed challenges due to possible objections from the elders.

"Thank you, Loraine." Marco chuckled.

Loraine wanted to tease Marco for being too polite. However, she remembered he was alone in the Cruz family and must be knackered. Therefore, she comforted him with kind words and advised him to rest.

After hanging up the phone, Loraine pondered over organizing the banquet.

The banquet represented the Cruz family's dignity, marking Marco's inaugural invitation to Zodiac celebrities on behalf of the Cruz family. Therefore, they had to proceed with caution.

In the following days, Loraine was busy dabbling with work and focusing on organizing the banquet. She meticulously drafted the guest list and arranged the minute details.

Fortunately, Marco helped her and the experienced butler of the Cruz family offered many insights and suggestions.

One day, Loraine went to work as usual. As soon as she entered the company, she sensed the atmosphere was off.

Although it had only been a short while since Loraine took over the branch's operations, she had a good rapport with the employees. Besides, she was amiable and approachable. Therefore, almost all the employees liked her and sincerely greeted her when she came to the company.

However, everything seemed strange today. Although some greeted her, Loraine sensed they weren't as genuine as before. Their gaze bore thousands of questions. They were all huddled together, whispering about something when she turned around.

Loraine was puzzled. She unobtrusively glanced at the employees discussing before entering her office without saying a word.

Just as she thought of calling Remy to ask what happened, Remy knocked on the door and walked in with a strange expression on her face.

"Boss, did you see the news online?" she asked hesitantly.

Loraine frowned as her employees' strange behavior made sensed now. "What's wrong?"

After a moment's hesitation, Remy gave her phone, which showed a discussion on a social media app.

"These paparazzi... well, I don't know when they took pictures of you. Rumors of you two-timing are spreading all over the internet."

Loraine clicked the picture to take a closer look. She was both amused and annoyed.

It was a picture of her and Edwin. Edwin was waiting for her at the restaurant by the door. There was another picture of him giving her gifts as they walked out together. The title read, "Engaged Female Entrepreneur's Affair With a Young Stud."

Loraine held her head in her hand, finding the news ridiculous.

Only the people of the high society knew Loraine was the daughter of the Wilson Family. And she deliberately avoided publicity and involvement with the Wilson family, so not even Remy, her assistant, was aware of it. Furthermore, Edwin, who grew up abroad, rarely appeared in the public eye in their home country, so very few people knew he was from the Wilson family and Loraine's cousin.

Loraine thought for a moment and said, "Contact the person who posted the pictures and find out who took them."

Then, she called Edwin.

Edwin was still dazed when he picked up the phone. He was an ambitious, hardworking person and didn't pay attention to the news. He thought Loraine was calling to urge progress. Therefore, he immediately reported the progress to her.

"Did you not see the news?" asked Loraine. "We're in a scandal together."

Edwin was taken aback. "What?"

He quickly searched the web and spoke to his colleague. After moments of chaos and commotion, he barked, "Who was stupid enough to do it? How could they insult you like this? I'll deal with them! Loraine, please don't be mad. I'll clarify everything right away!"

However, Loraine calmly stopped him. "No need to rush. If we attempt to clarify the situation now, it will require more effort from us, so let's wait patiently. Is your proposal ready?"

Edwin couldn't follow the logic and involuntarily replied, "Almost done."

Loraine made up her mind. "All right. Let's hold a press conference right away."