

Chapter 597 The Pilot Unit

Saylor stood there dumbfounded as she watched Mekhi's face turn pale as he trembled before Loraine. He wore a bitter smile at Loraine's harsh words. "Miss Torres," he said pleadingly, "my little girl's words were unintentional. You don't have to take it to this extent, do you?"

But Loraine ignored him and instead turned to talk to Marco.

Saylor was still shocked and confused. She shouted at Mekhi, "Dad, this woman must be a fraud. Don't mind her!"

Nevertheless, in less than three minutes, several uniformed men appeared. They greeted Loraine and then turned to the Shaws.

Saylor was now scared and quickly hid behind Mekhi, sobbing, "Dad, who are they? When did this run-down street have any regulatory personnel?"

She couldn't understand how Loraine was able to summon these guys with just one phone call. Was Loraine really connected to powerful and influential people?

The head of the team had overheard her and he frowned unhappily. "What street are you referring to as run-down? This is the pilot event of Vagow's CBD food exhibition. It has been approved by the government and will be used as a landmark attraction for Vagow in the future. You've disrupted the operation of this street, and if this happens again, legal action will be taken!"

Saylor became even more terrified after hearing this, but



Mekhi suddenly grabbed her and pushed her in front of Loraine. "Apologize!" he shouted hysterically, his eyes angry and bloodshot.

The erstwhile arrogant and domineering Saylor was now totally frightened. She trembled for a while and then burst into tears, apologizing as she cried, "I'm sorry, Miss Torres. I was wrong. I shouldn't have tried to steal your man. Please don't send me to jail."

Loraine frowned and looked at her with disgust. She couldn't believe that even in this situation, Saylor was still fixated on the thought of men. Saylor was clearly unaware of the gravity of her actions.

Nevertheless, Loraine composed herself and addressed the leader of the team in a businesslike manner, completely ignoring the presence of the Shaws.

"There are surveillance cameras throughout the street, so please ensure that her disruptive actions are accurately documented. I believe this is not the first time they've harassed vendors and tourists. This matter needs to be investigated thoroughly and appropriate punishment must be administered. In addition, the market should not just allow anyone to set up shop here. And people like these who look down on vendors should all be kicked out."

The CBD project not only had the strong support of the government, but it was also the product of Loraine and Marco's hard work. Though the food street was just one of the pilot projects, they could not afford to allow any negligence because it could harm the reputation of Universe Group.

The team nodded in agreement when Loraine had finished speaking. Then they turned to the father and daughter. They ignored their endless pleas as they dragged the two of them



out of the place.

Though her ears were now free from crazy noise, Loraine still felt a bit regretful.

She had originally wanted to take Marco out to relax and show him the extent of the food street project, but this incident had really ruined her plans.

Just then, Marco took her hand and said comfortingly, "Don't mind them. There will always be people who act arrogantly simply because they have money."

Loraine smiled and nodded. "Yes, they are not worth our attention. It's just a pity that they ruined our good mood," she said regretfully.

Marco leaned towards her, but he didn't touch her. He only tightened her coat around her in order to shield her from the evening wind.

"As long as I'm with you, my mood is always good," he said to her.

When Loraine heard this, her face turned red, but luckily for her, Marco had already turned his attention elsewhere. He looked around at the bustling street and asked curiously, "Are you behind the emergence of this snack street? I heard those people say that the food exhibition was done by the Universe Group, right?"

Loraine nodded. "The food city project attracted a lot of investment, but most of the brands were high-end catering enterprises. If we want the CBD to be a significant landmark in Vagow, we can't simply cater to the wealthy guests. We also need to pay attention to the lower end of the market."

Without realising it, they had started discussing solely about

work-related matters.

Loraine continued, "Actually, college students and young people are also a significant consumer group in the market nowadays. They like excitement and a fast-paced lifestyle. In fact, the snack street model is more down to earth and more easily accepted by the public."

Marco nodded in agreement and his mind went back to the sights he had seen along the way. This kind of business model was innovative. It not only served to bring tourism to Vagow but it also provided job opportunities for many people. It was quite different from the traditional food courts found in large shopping malls.

"I've never been to a place like this, and I couldn't possibly think of such wonderful ideas. Loraine, you are doing a great job," he praised with a slight smile.

Loraine paused for a moment and looked at him, saying, "This is just a trial run. I wanted to see the results before contacting you to formally draft the regulations."

Unfortunately, he had been ousted as CEO of Bryant Group before she even had the chance to bring the matter to him.

It was at this point that Marco suddenly realized that the project no longer had anything to do with him since he was no longer CEO and he let out a wry chuckle at the irony of it all.

"Anyway, I'm still very grateful that you took the time to bring me here," he shrugged. "But don't worry; as long as the new owner of Bryant Group isn't foolish, she will agree to your proposal."



Chapter 598 Covering All The Purchases

Loraine felt quite uncomfortable with that statement.

Now that the Bryant family had kicked Marco out, there was no one else that would be in charge apart from Marina. Without Marco in charge, Loraine had no intention of continuing her partnership with Bryant Group and neither was she willing to share her ideas with them.

Just then, all of a sudden, the street vendors gathered and started clapping in applause.

Loraine and Marco were both puzzled. They turned to look around, and everywhere they turned, they saw vendors applauding.

They didn't understand why this was going on.

A middle-aged man standing close to them suddenly said with a happy smile, "You really made everyone's day by teaching that father and daughter a lesson!"

"That girl actually grew up on our street," another person said. "Her father rented out several properties to us for our businesses. He's more ruthless than a landlord. We often experienced power outages and water cutoffs, and they even had the audacity to look down on us!"

Another person spat on the ground and said indignantly, "They both came from humble backgrounds. The father got rich from the demolition compensation and started showing off. And his





daughter... that one has nothing but a bad temper and rude behaviour!"

It was evident that the resentment towards the Shaw family had been building up for a long time. Now, it had all burst out, and everyone was praising Loraine for teaching them a lesson.

This made Loraine feel a little embarrassed. If it hadn't been for the fact that the Shaws had provoked her, she wouldn't have known that there were such oppressive people on this street.

The vendors kept reminiscing with one another about the exploits of the Shaws, creating a warm and lively atmosphere but not a noisy one. Some of the older vendors who were near Loraine sighed, "So, you're the CEO of Universe Group. Ah, this street used to be much dirtier and messier, but thanks to Universe Group and Bryant Group, our conditions have improved a lot. We can now rent shops at reasonable prices and earn some money to support our families. You are all kind-hearted people!"

One of the men even nearly went down on his knees in gratitude as he said to Loraine, "If it weren't for your help with this place, I wouldn't even be able to make a living and feed my family."

Loraine quickly stopped him from kneeling down and then she went ahead to address the crowd, "I'm flattered by all your praises. Actually, I'm just a businessperson doing my best to create mutually beneficial opportunities."

Having seen how the Bryant family had given up their company's reputation just for the sake of protecting family assets, Loraine couldn't help but feel emotional as she looked at these sincere ordinary people. She turned her head to look at Marco and she saw that he was also deeply moved.



This heartfelt gratitude was something he had never encountered before.

He and Loraine usually dealt with multimillion or even billion-dollar deals, playing mind games with competitors, and even being cautious around their own partners.

But these ordinary folks sold cheap items for a few dollars or tens of dollars, yet their hearts were filled with the simplest and most sincere goodwill.

Marco gently held Loraine, afraid that she wouldn't be able to withstand the enthusiasm of the crowd. Then he leaned closer to her and said in her ear, "During the fair, the winning bidders didn't express their gratitude as genuinely as these people."

Loraine raised an eyebrow in surprise. How could he even think of comparing both cases? Except for her best friend, Jennie, who had helped her out, the other participants were only motivated by their selfish goals. No matter what they gained, they wouldn't feel grateful.

Just then, the young girl who had sold them crepes earlier approached them, laughing sweetly. "I knew you two were the perfect couple! Thank you both. From now on, when you both come to buy crepes from my stall, you'll get one free!"

Loraine was taken aback by this. But just as she was about to politely decline the kind offer, the other vendors started cheering.

"So, you're a couple. You came here on a date!"

"Mr. Bryant, Miss Torres, come and taste the ice cream from my shop. You dealt with those people for us, so you'll get one for every one you buy in the future!"



The vendors began to vie for their attention, each one begging them to come taste their products. They were so many that Loraine didn't really know how to respond.

Marco, on the other hand, had a smile on his face. Holding Loraine in his arms, he announced cheerfully, "Thank you all for your praise and invitations. I will cover all the purchases from every stall here tonight. So, just sell out and go home early."

This statement shocked everyone.

Even Loraine looked at him in surprise. Had he forgotten that he was no longer the CEO of Bryant Group? How could he spend money so lavishly? And moreover, how would he get the money to afford this?



Chapter 599 You Being With Me Is All I Need

To preserve Marco's self-esteem, Loraine didn't address the situation directly. Instead, she explained to the vendors, "Come on, he's just joking. Don't take it too seriously."

Hearing this, the vendors laughed it off, insisting on offering Loraine and Marco free samples.

Loraine thanked everyone, but insisted on paying for all the food they would receive and taking only one portion.

The vendors couldn't persuade her to do otherwise, so they reluctantly accepted the money. In return, they gave her a larger portion than usual.

Marco looked slightly stunned when he received various kinds of food. He glanced at Loraine with a trace of grievance in his expression, as if her intervention was a form of bullying. "I wasn't joking. I wanted to buy everything in order to help them," he informed her.

By now, Loraine's hands were already full, so she quickly thanked the vendors and pulled Marco away from the crowd. She heard what he told her and had to come up with a smart excuse.

"Eating too much of these snacks will ruin the fun. Besides, how can the two of us finish so much food? We will just buy a variety of these items and eat them together."

When Marco heard this suggestion, his eyebrows twitched



slightly. Though he didn't show it on his face, his heart felt warm, and he immediately followed Loraine's suggestion by taking a bite of his ice cream cone and then handing it to her.

"That's a good idea. Hmm, try this. It's very sweet."

Loraine hesitated for a moment. She felt like she had dug a pit for herself with her own words.

But when she saw Marco's sincere gaze, she couldn't refuse. After a brief pause, she took a bite off the ice cream.

The strawberry cream stuck to the corner of her mouth, causing Marco's gaze to darken slightly. But he knew he had already gained enough advantages for the day, so he didn't dare to be presumptuous. He simply handed her a tissue to clean her mouth.

After strolling around for a moment while eating what they bought, they became quite full. Fortunately, they had finished all the food they had purchased, and they were now approaching the end of the street.

Marco looked relaxed, as if he had completely forgotten all his previous troubles. He looked at Loraine with a bright gleam in his eyes. "Let me take you home," he offered.

Loraine had to swallow the teasing remark "You don't even have a car" that had been on the tip of her tongue and nodded in agreement.

Once again, they hailed a taxi on the roadside. As they got in, they clasped their hands together and never let go until they reached their destination.

Loraine didn't return to the Torres family house but to her own apartment.



She hesitated for a while as she stood at the front door. It didn't seem appropriate to invite Marco upstairs at such a late hour. But with all he had gone through, she didn't feel comfortable letting him go alone either.

She knew he wouldn't go back to the Bryant family villa now, but she didn't know if his apartment was under his possession or if it had been taken from him. Frankly, she had no idea where he could go.

She raised her head and said, "Marco..."

Coincidentally, Marco was also about to say something. They both spoke simultaneously and their eyes met, making them smile at each other.

But Loraine didn't feel shy. Instead, she asked him immediately, "What are your plans now? Do you need my help with anything?"

Marco's heart felt warm when he heard this, and he shook his head with a smile.

"Don't worry about me," he assured her. "I turned Bryant Group from a small company on the verge of bankruptcy into a large corporation. I can start over and achieve similar results."

At that moment, he seemed to be the proud and decisive prodigy of the business world again.

"Loraine, I'll handle this matter myself. As long as you are with me, that's enough," he added with a much softer expression.

Just like tonight, if Loraine hadn't appeared, though Marco could have dealt with the Bryant family, he would have been in a sorry state.

Loraine sighed inwardly. She had never doubted Marco's



abilities. It seemed he had already decided exactly on how he was going to proceed.

"Alright then. Just let me know if you need anything. I'll be by your side," she promised with a smile. "By the way, I acquired the 1% share of Bryant Group back then just to help you. But now that you're no longer with Bryant Group, it seems useless. What should we do with it?"

"Sell them," Marco said unhesitatingly.

He paused for a moment and added, "I'll find the best time for you to do it, so you wouldn't incur losses."

Loraine smiled and nodded in agreement. Due to Marco's departure from Bryant Group, the stock price would definitely fluctuate greatly. It would be difficult to sell the shares without incurring any losses. But since Marco had said he would find a solution, Loraine had no worries.

Meanwhile, Marco looked at her and suddenly asked in a persuasive tone, "But... I still have to submit my resignation letter to Bryant Group. Will you accompany me?"

Who could refuse such a persuasive request? Certainly not Loraine.

She readily agreed, and Marco's face lit up in a bright smile. "Then I'll pick you up tomorrow," he promised.

Loraine laughed helplessly. She wasn't annoyed that he had gotten her to agree by being so nice and persuasive. Instead, she found it adorable that Marco could act like this. It was really cute to her.

"Alright then. It's late already. You should go in," Marco said and wished her good night before she entered her apartment.



But he stood there for a while, even after the lights upstairs had been turned off.

Eventually, he turned around, and the usual cold expression returned to his face as he dialed a number on his phone.

"Tomorrow, I'm going to Bryant Group. It's time to end this farce," he said briefly into the phone.



Chapter 600 The Exclusive Seat

The next day, as soon as Loraine woke up, she heard a car honking downstairs. With sleep still in her eyes, she picked up her phone and saw a message from Marco. "I'm here, waiting for you downstairs. Freshen up and come down for breakfast."

Oh, Marco was now personally bringing her breakfast? Loraine was so shocked that her drowsiness vanished instantly. She quickly got out of bed and hurriedly went through her morning routine before heading downstairs.

As she stepped outside, she saw that a vintage Maybach was parked there. It was an older model, well maintained, but in Loraine's eyes, it appeared through a filter of wistful memories. She felt a pang of bitterness, realizing how difficult it was for Marco. Just when he had managed to take Bryant Group to great heights, he was forced to start afresh. If it was someone else, they would have broken down already.

Seeing the current situation, she became even more conscious of his emotions. She approached him with a composed expression and tried to act as natural as possible.

On this occasion, Marco wasn't formally dressed. His overall style leaned more towards casual, and he had a smile on his face. He had transformed from an unapproachable and ruthless CEO to someone that was easygoing and relatable.

Loraine couldn't help but chuckle internally. But outwardly, she carefully chose her words. "It seems the Maybach is a bit slow. I have a few sports cars sitting in my garage, and they're all in



good condition. How about you drive one of those?"

Knowing how snobbish some members of the Bryant Group could be, she felt that Marco couldn't afford to be seen driving such an old car around, lest he become the target of ridicule and sarcasm.

Marco himself seemed to understand her consideration and his smile deepened slightly. He didn't say anything. He simply leaned forward to open the passenger door and invited her in.

Loraine didn't try to persuade him any further. With a shrug and a sigh, she stepped into the car.

But just then, Marco whispered softly into her ear, "Loraine, this seat is reserved exclusively for you."

Loraine was taken aback by his words.

The seat was beside the driver's, clearly meant for his spouse.

Loraine couldn't help but blush at this realization. But seeing the lack of wear and tear on the seat, she subconsciously asked, "Hasn't anyone ever sat in this seat before?"

"Never," Marco said firmly. "Loraine, this car holds great significance to me. You're not only the first person to sit in this seat, but you're also the first person I'll be picking up in this car."

"Why?" Loraine asked, her heart already racing.

Marco smiled, "Because I bought this car for myself alone when I first took over Bryant Group and won my first major deal. When they took all my assets and properties, only this car was left."

When Marco arrived from abroad, Bryant Group was on the verge of going bankrupt. Everyone thought he was a newbie and





no one thought highly of him. But eventually, he proved them wrong. After achieving the supposedly impossible feat of saving the company, he bought himself a car to celebrate. Though the Maybach later became very old, he kept it well maintained because of its symbolic significance.

Lorraine's heart raced faster and faster. She felt his words were more moving than any sweet talk she had ever heard in her life.

Clearly, he had made sure that she was the first and only person to share with him something of such extraordinary importance. This touched her deeply.

Meanwhile, Marco got into the car from the driver side and leaned over to fasten her seatbelt. Lorraine's breath hitched, her face flushed completely, and her hands nervously gripped the seat as she stammered, "I... I can do it myself."

Despite her words, she did not offer any resistance to Marco's proximity. She was only shy.

Marco looked at her blushing face and intentionally leaned in closer, his warm breath caressing her ear. "Last night, you mentioned that you spent 60 million dollars to get me. Since I'm yours now, isn't it normal for me to help fasten your seatbelt?"

Lorraine stared at him with wide eyes, her breath caught in her throat.

"Or is there something else you want me to do?" he teased with a chuckle.

Lorraine quickly realized what he meant and she pushed him away in embarrassment, but her small hand had no effect on his solid, warm chest, making her look powerless. He even went ahead to lean closer to her.

Lorraine felt even more embarrassed and helpless within the



confined space of the car's front seat.

Was he going to kiss her right here and right now?

With this thought ringing in her head, she screwed her eyes shut nervously.

"Okay, I won't tease you anymore," Marco said with a smile. And then he placed a kiss on her forehead.

"For the rest, I'll make it up to you once I completely sever ties with the Bryant Group," he added.

