

Chapter 687 Milk

Loraine laughed in her exasperation, playfully patting Marco as she retorted, "Your leg is what's injured, not your hand."

Marco said nothing, his eyes adopting a pitiable gaze, reminiscent of a large dog attempting to be endearing.

His expression melted Loraine's resolve. Blushing, she gently scolded him, "Smooth talker!"

Though her words were stern, she took the bowl and began to feed him.

Seizing the opportunity, Marco obediently sipped the milk from the spoon, his eyes following Loraine's every movement.

As she pulled back her hand, his gaze lingered on her, a smile dancing on his lips.

His refined features formed an almost silly yet charming expression.

The intensity of his stare flushed Loraine's cheeks, her hand trembling slightly, but she managed to keep the milk from spilling.

Marco's gentle laughter filled the air, his voice husky and resonant as he murmured, "I'm not just smooth-talking. Everything I say is the truth."

His voice seemed charged, sending shivers through Loraine's ears.



She coughed lightly, her face becoming serious as she scooped up another spoonful and moved it toward him.

This time, Marco held the spoon in his mouth, releasing it only when Loraine gave him an embarrassed glare. His body followed her every move; his eyes never left hers.

"I'm sincere. I truly enjoy being fed by you. Food prepared by your hands tastes especially delicious," he said earnestly, each word carefully pronounced, as if reciting a solemn vow.

A beam of light illuminated his face, giving him the appearance of a devoted disciple, waiting for her response.

Lorraine's cheeks reddened, her hand trembling slightly.

The warm milk spilled, soaking her clothes but not scalding her.

The sensation made her shiver.

They looked at each other, momentarily dazed.

Marco's gaze rested on the darkened patch on her clothing, deep and meaningful.

Lorraine's blush deepened further. Flustered, she hastened to set the bowl aside and stand up, her intent to escape clear. "I need to change my clothes."

Marco's grip was firm on her hand as he pulled her back.

Lorraine stumbled into his embrace, her face a mix of embarrassment and annoyance. "What are you doing? It's your fault for saying that and making me lose my grip!"

"Yes, my fault," Marco chuckled, taking the bowl from her hand and placing it effortlessly on the bedside table, a suggestive look in his eyes.



"So, let me make amends."

His intense gaze gave Loraine an uneasy feeling, sparking an instinctive urge to flee.

Loraine felt that if she stayed any longer, the situation might slip beyond her control, yet she felt powerless to stop it.

Marco reached out, his fingers grazing through her hair and trailing down her neck, giving it a gentle squeeze.

A soft moan escaped Loraine's lips, and she arched her neck, her legs weakening beneath her.

After several intimate moments together, Marco had become well-acquainted with her sensitive areas. Like an experienced lover, he cradled her half-limp body in his arms, his head bending to carefully clean the trace of spilled milk from her white blouse.

Her body tense, and her fingertips trembling, Loraine laid her hand on his chest and pushed him weakly. "You, don't..."

"Don't what?"

With reddened and tearful eyes, Loraine looked at him, appearing as though he were taunting her.

Marco spoke innocently. "I'm cleaning your clothes."

He used his lips to delicately remove the damp marks on her chest, following the trail left by the spilled milk.

The sensation was overwhelming, bringing Loraine to the brink of tears. Her hands grasped at his collar, wrinkling his perfectly tailored shirt.

She seemed ready to protest, but any words were replaced by



a series of soft, involuntary moans.

Marco carefully cleaned the spilled milk, working his way back up until he pressed his lips against her graceful neck. He found Loraine's lips, pressed tightly together in anticipation.

Parting her lips, he captured her escaped moans, his seductive technique drawing them in.

The room's atmosphere grew thick with a sweet and intoxicating fragrance, a heat causing their throats to dry. Marco's breathing quickened, and he chuckled softly, "Milk tastes even better this way."

Loraine weakly tapped his chest, whispering, "Pervert."

Marco took it as praise and redoubled his efforts. Loraine's resistance fell away under his skillful touch, her soft cries betraying her involuntary response to his attentiveness.

The man in control didn't miss this reaction; a smug smile crossed his face, but he didn't press further. Instead, he soothed her with a tender kiss, his voice husky. "Are you uncomfortable? Can I use my hand to help?"

Her eyes shining with mixed emotions, Loraine hesitated, surveying the room before shyly consenting.

That night, passion unfolded between them, its magnetism irresistible.



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Chapter 688 Returning

The profound satisfaction and pleasure of the previous night lulled Loraine into a deep sleep. When she awoke the next morning, reality and dreams seemed to meld together.

She and Marco shared the same bed.

He was still asleep, his typically stern brows now serene and gentle. His breath was even, his chest moving rhythmically. One of his hands kept her close, and she had fallen asleep with her head on his arm.

As she recalled the events of the night before, Loraine's cheeks began to flush.

She found it hard to believe that she had uttered those sweet, intimate sounds, and Marco, with just his hand, had nearly overwhelmed her senses.

His passionate kisses haunted her thoughts.

Absorbed in her reflection, Loraine's hand instinctively reached out to trace his well-sculpted lips.

She was met unexpectedly by a pair of watchful eyes.

He must have been awake for a while, his eyes clear and alert, a mischievous smile on his lips, as though he'd been awaiting her playful exploration.

Surprised, Loraine felt a rush of embarrassment. Before she could respond, Marco pulled her close, his warm breath teasing her ear as he whispered, "Loraine, I assisted you last night.

Next time, when my leg heals, will you return the favor?"

His words were intentionally vague, his voice alluring, as if he were tasting her ear while speaking.

Loraine's ears turned a vivid red, and her mind wandered to imagine how she might "help" Marco.

Her blush deepened, and she cleared her throat, pretending calm. "Well, that depends on how you behave. But first and foremost, we must heal your leg!"

It took months to recover from tendon injuries and bone fractures – most wouldn't have the luxury of rest in such a circumstance, particularly in this remote countryside with its limited medical resources. Given the recent events and Marco's lack of proper care, Loraine's concern for his lasting health was natural.

She thought back to the doctor's grave diagnosis, fearing that his injury could cause permanent damage.

They needed to address the village's problems swiftly and then return Marco to the city for proper care.

With the Cooper family arrested, things should be simpler.

Plans for road construction and the orphanage were well underway, and with the engineering team's competence, Loraine knew she didn't need to worry.

She spoke briefly with the engineers before deciding to depart. Before leaving, she paid a special visit to Eloise.

Now living in the village chief's house, Eloise had arranged for the children to stay in various villagers' homes. Loraine explained Marco's wound and the need for their hasty departure. Though Eloise was sad to see her go, she

understood the urgency and sincerely urged Loraine to be cautious on her journey.

The village chief seemed notably uneasy; after some fidgeting, he eventually bowed his head and said, "Loraine, I truly thank you this time! I recognize that, as the village chief, I have had my share of shortcomings. But the most significant issue has been resolved. I promise to restore the village's reputation and ensure that your sincere efforts won't be wasted!"

Loraine smiled, her expression noncommittal, and turned to depart.

Fortuitously, the construction team had vehicles designed for mountainous terrain. The road they chose was relatively smooth, sparing Marco excessive discomfort.

Upon reaching the town, they switched to Loraine's car and proceeded directly to the nearest hospital.

Once they arrived, a doctor promptly began assessing Marco's injuries. As they removed the hastily applied bandages, Loraine was shocked to discover that Marco's wounds were even more severe than she had first realized.

The doctor's face fell as he observed the inflamed wound and chastised Marco, "Young people shouldn't take their health for granted just because they are fit! Why didn't you come to the hospital right after sustaining such an injury?"

Loraine watched, noting Marco's unusual compliance as he nodded obediently without a hint of resistance.

The doctor maintained his stern tone. "Look at this wound. If you had waited even a couple more days, you might have lost this leg! The timely sterilization and bandaging helped, but did you engage in strenuous activity after getting hurt?"

He turned a disapproving eye toward Loraine, saying, "And you, as his family member, shouldn't you have monitored his behavior?"

Loraine's cheeks colored, and she bowed her head to accept the reproach, while Marco coughed in discomfort.

Though the doctor's admonishment probably referred to Marco's insistence on walking to aid Loraine, both of them couldn't help but remember the passionate moments from the previous night at the mention of "strenuous activity."

Marco quickly intervened, "My girlfriend has been very attentive. She was terribly worried earlier, but the medical conditions in the countryside were inadequate, so we had no choice."

Loraine also readily took the blame, adding, "It's my fault for not being more vigilant. Doctor, we are grateful for your care."

The doctor couldn't help but chuckle at their behavior. Were these young lovers competing to shoulder the responsibility?

Once the reprimands were over, the doctor continued with his diagnosis. "His leg was struck by a heavy object, correct? There's a slight misalignment of the bone; we'll need to reset it."

Loraine's anxiety was apparent as she questioned, "Is it serious?"

"It's not a significant procedure, but..."

"But what?" she pressed.

The doctor cleared his throat. "To minimize the risk to the nerves, we don't recommend using anesthesia during the bone reset."

The idea of Marco enduring such pain without anesthesia caused Loraine's heart to tremble. Marco, however, remained

Chapter 688 Returning

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remarkably calm, declaring, "I'm not afraid of pain. Doctor, proceed without anesthesia."



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Chapter 689 Wedding

The doctor immediately began removing the old bandages. Loraine bit her lip, averting her eyes from the gruesome sight.

What was revealed was only a fraction of the horror, displaying burnt and decaying flesh; it was an eerie and terrifying spectacle.

Amidst the mangled flesh, even glimpses of bone were visible, a stark white contrast.

Loraine knew Marco was severely injured, but this was beyond her worst fears. The memory of him relying on that injured leg to help her the previous day caused her heart to tremble.

Sensing her distress, Marco sought to comfort her, "It looks worse than it feels; it's not painful."

The doctor, unimpressed with Marco's bravado, peeled away a piece of bandage stuck to the skin. Marco's fingers twitched, and his complexion turned pale.

Not painful? Huh!

The next step was to remove the dead tissue and clean the wound. The doctor summoned two nurses, instructing them, "Hold him down while we treat the wound. Ensure he doesn't move."

Loraine thought the doctor hadn't yet recognized Marco's incredible tolerance. Over the past days, he hadn't complained of pain, even maintaining his energy and intimacy with her.

Still worried, she approached his bedside, taking his hand and offering a reassuring look.

She would support him through this ordeal.

Marco, pale but determined, smiled at her and signaled for the doctor to continue.

As the dead tissue was excised, Loraine winced in empathy, while Marco remained resolutely silent. Not a sound escaped him, though sweat beaded on his forehead and his brow creased with strain. His pain was evident, yet he bore it silently.

Her heart aching for him, Loraine wiped away his sweat, her eyes accidentally falling on the wound. Anxiously, she questioned the doctor, "Is it finished?"

The wound was now clean, and it was time to reset the bone. The doctor spoke evenly. "Aligning the bone properly is vital. The patient hasn't vocalized his pain yet, so why the haste?"

Loraine found little solace in his words. Observing Marco's pallor, she knew his pain was intense.

He was simply adept at concealing it, never complaining or revealing his suffering.

Suddenly, a grating sound filled the room as bones rubbed together. Loraine's scalp prickled, and Marco's body involuntarily tensed. His face turned a deathly white, and veins stood out on the back of his hand.

Loraine and the nurses strained to keep him still. Seeing his torment, she quickly embraced him, tenderly smoothing his furrowed brow. She leaned in, placing a gentle kiss at the corner of his mouth, consoling him as one might comfort a frightened child, "Don't be afraid, it's okay, it doesn't hurt that

much. Just endure a bit longer."

Marco's gaze was drawn irresistibly to Loraine's face, his attention ensnared by her actions. He stared at her intently, focusing solely on her.

Though naturally shy, Loraine had kissed him to provide solace, and now, under his unyielding scrutiny, she felt her cheeks warm. However, in this fragile moment, she found herself unable to articulate her embarrassment.

Marco, in contrast, felt a pull to return the kiss, a natural instinct urging him on. Loraine's inner turmoil was apparent, torn between the desire to lean in and the impulse to pull away.

Fortunately, the doctor quickened his pace, deftly finishing the procedure and rewrapping the wound. With a sigh of relief, he announced, "All done."

The contrast between the hospital's expert bandaging and the crude attempt at the village clinic was pronounced. The fresh, white wrappings were neatly fastened with a skillful knot.

Suddenly, Loraine became aware of the two nurses in the room. Her face turned crimson, and she hastily stepped back, consumed by a wish to disappear into the floor.

What had she just done? Kissing Marco so openly in front of others was mortifying, even if the situation justified it. The situation was utterly embarrassing.

Marco, unperturbed by the audience, might have even prolonged the kiss if not for Loraine's obvious unease.

The doctor's dry humor dispelled the tension as he remarked, "You young lovebirds are quite the pair. I've had my entertainment watching you kiss while resetting a bone. Will you be inviting me to your wedding next time?"

Lorraine's cheeks deepened in hue at the mention of "wedding," and her mind momentarily wandered.

Her first marriage to Marco had been far from idyllic; there had been no jubilant celebration at all.

Initially, he had been so occupied that even a proper wedding ceremony hadn't been feasible. Without the marriage certificate, she might have doubted whether she had married into the Bryant family or simply been pressed into service.

However, life was filled with unexpected twists. Their three-year marriage had started with apathy, but following their divorce, they had grown increasingly intimate. Now, they could even converse about marriage with strangers, and it was peculiar how their relationship had evolved.

As she prepared to explain that they had been married previously but were no longer together, Marco spoke first. "Certainly. When we celebrate our wedding again, we'll make sure to invite you to share in our joy."



Chapter 690 Test

After the rebandaging was complete and Marco was admitted to the hospital for observation, Loraine felt a heavy burden lift from her heart; she visibly relaxed.

Yet this relief was soon accompanied by a wave of exhaustion and hunger.

Only after Marco had drifted off to sleep did Loraine finally allow herself to step out and seek sustenance.

As she was about to leave, she realized that her phone had run out of battery and shut down, no doubt a result of her frenzied activities the previous day.

Once plugged in, her phone buzzed to life, and a torrent of messages flooded in, the majority from her concerned family members.

Loraine froze for a moment, the realization dawning on her that she had neglected to assure them of her safety over these tumultuous days.

Her uncle, Rowan, interrupted her thoughts with a call. She picked up quickly, her voice light and playful. "Uncle Rowan."

His stern and serious tone immediately followed. "Finally decided to answer the phone? Why did you go to the hospital as soon as you returned to the city? Are you hurt?"

His questions came fast and furious, leaving Loraine momentarily bewildered and unsure which to address first.



Then, as though someone had grabbed the phone from Rowan, her other uncle, Wesley, chimed in with a cheerful grin in his voice, "Lorrie, Rowan and I are on our way to the hospital. Do you have any cravings? I'll bring you some food."

The warmth in her uncle's words eased Loraine's nerves; she quickly requested a nourishing meal and settled herself outside Marco's hospital room to await her uncles' arrival.

Before long, Rowan and Wesley, tall and handsome, appeared in the hospital corridor.

With a worried expression, Rowan approached Loraine, his features softening only when he saw her sitting comfortably. He urgently pressed her for details about what had happened.

Sheepishly, Loraine explained the events, emphasizing how Marco had sustained his injuries while rescuing her.

Both uncles exchanged knowing glances before turning to peer through the window at Marco, who lay resting. This time, they held back any criticism.

Marco had earned himself another favor in their eyes.

Loraine cautiously assessed her uncles' reactions and continued, "This time I've also discovered some clues regarding my parents' accident... The Cooper family might know something about it."

Rowan's eyes hardened, and he nodded, his voice cold. "I'll look into this matter. And as for the Cooper family daring to touch you, I'll teach them a lesson they won't forget!"

Wesley nodded in agreement, his face set in determination. Anyone foolish enough to threaten a member of the Torres family was asking for trouble.



After comprehending the situation, their expressions grew more contemplative as they looked back at Marco in his hospital room.

Initially, they had harbored doubts about Marco, even after his break from the Bryant family. While he had risen in their estimation, that didn't mean they were ready to fully accept him.

However, hearing an extraordinary man like Marco almost sacrificing his leg to protect Loraine marked a significant shift in their perception.

As Rowan and Wesley observed Marco lying on the hospital bed, pale and frail, they found their emotions stirred.

Within the hospital room, Marco seemed to sense something. As he slowly sat up, his eyes settled on the area outside the door.

The two uncles exchanged a meaningful glance, their thoughts in unison.

Just then, Loraine's phone rang again. Casting a look at the hospital room, she turned to her uncles, her expression uncertain. "Could you help me watch over Marco for a while?"

Wesley's face broke into an innocent grin. "No problem at all. You go ahead and do what you need to."

Rowan expressed his agreement without hesitation.

After Loraine departed, their faces transformed instantly. With deliberate steps, they pushed open the door to Marco's room.

A sense of trepidation crept into Marco's heart as he watched them approach.

His success or failure in this critical test before her uncles

hinged on the forthcoming moments.

Wesley glanced at him, his voice tinged with admiration yet challenging. "Impressive, boy. First, you saved Rowan, then my father, and now Lorrie. How should our family repay you?"

Maintaining his calm, Marco answered, "Mr. Torres, these actions were my duty. I did them for Loraine. And she doesn't harbor ill feelings toward me anymore."

Wesley's eyebrows shot up, suspicion in his eyes. He fixed a wary glare on Marco. "What do you mean she doesn't harbor ill feelings anymore? Wait, you scoundrel, you didn't take advantage of Lorrie while you were in the countryside, did you?"

At these words, Rowan acted instantly, seizing Marco's collar, his voice icy as he demanded, "Where did you touch Lorrie?"

Meeting his gaze unflinchingly, Marco replied, "I hold Loraine in high regard. As for that matter, I'm more willing than anyone else to wait until we get married."

His restraint, time and again, was born of his determination to provide Loraine with the best and most sincere commitment.

A new beginning was hard-fought, and he would not squander it.

Rowan's and Wesley's faces softened somewhat at his words.

With a cold snort, Rowan released his grip, but Wesley continued to press Marco, his eyes narrowing, voice mocking, "You still want to be with Lorrie? Do you think you're worthy?"


Marco's response was earnest and firm. "I will strive to be worthy of her. I have no ties to the Bryant family, and I care nothing for the Bryant Group. But I have faith in my abilities, and I can create a new business empire."

His words left them without a retort. Regardless of their personal sentiments toward Marco, his merit was undeniable. The rise and fall of the Bryant Group were inextricably linked to him, a fact they recognized.

Wesley, however, was not quite prepared to concede. With a dismissive snort, he declared, "Let me tell you, if you want to marry Lorrie, you'll have to become part of the Torres family."

Intended as a barb, none expected Marco's prompt and determined response, "I'm willing to be."



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Chapter 691 Willing

Wesley's disbelief was palpable, his eyes widening as he grappled with Marco's assertion. Though he harbored some resentment towards Marco, he was well aware of the man's once towering pride and arrogance.

When Wesley had offhandedly suggested him becoming part of the Torres family, it had been nothing more than a jest.

But Marco's response was serious, and it caught Wesley off guard.

"I was just joking!" Wesley cried out, his expression contorting as though he had swallowed something distasteful. Frustration bubbled over, and he stomped his foot in irritation.

However, Marco remained calmly composed, countering, "Mr. Torres, I wasn't joking."

His sincerity was clear; Marco genuinely wished to become part of the Torres family.

Wesley's face transformed into a mosaic of complex emotions. It was then that Rowan intervened, laughing lightly as he placed a reassuring hand on Wesley's shoulder, signaling him to step aside.

"Marco, honestly speaking, if it weren't for those past issues, I'd be more than pleased to see you together with Lorrie," Rowan confessed, his voice reflecting understanding.

He was likely the first in the Torres family to change his perception of Marco, recognizing the undeniable connection

between him and Loraine.

But marrying into another family was no trivial matter.

Rowan's gaze hardened, his voice taking on a serious tone as he asked, "Are you truly willing to marry into my family? Understand this: your children will carry the Torres surname, and you'll have to prioritize Lorrie's wishes, making her the center of your world."

Marco's smile was relaxed, yet his eyes sparkled with conviction. "I understand, and I am willing to accept those."

He felt no particular attachment to his own surname and was unburdened by excessive pride. Besides, wasn't he already accustomed to putting Loraine first in his life?

"I won't let Loraine suffer or be unhappy again. If I ever fail her, I'm prepared to accept any consequences," Marco affirmed, locking eyes with Rowan, his voice resolute.

Rowan's response was a thoughtful silence, his mind grappling with Marco's earnestness.

He had to acknowledge that Marco was, at present, the only one who seemed worthy of Loraine in his eyes.

Wesley's anxiety grew as he saw Rowan's contemplation. "Rowan, you wouldn't actually agree to this, would you? What about Dad..."

Rowan's response was steady, his voice carrying a weight of authority. "I'll talk to Dad about this matter. But remember," he looked squarely at Marco, his voice taking on a stern edge as he continued, "Hold true to your words today. If you ever harm Lorrie again, I won't spare you."

In another part of the corridor, Loraine found a quiet corner to

take a call.

Her assistant from the countryside was on the line. "Miss Torres, we found the necklace you asked us to locate. We've redeemed it; should we bring it to the hospital?"

Hearing this, Loraine's heart quickened, and she nodded, her steps hastening towards the hospital entrance.

An exquisite box was soon placed into Loraine's trembling hands.

She hesitated, her emotions roiling, before finally opening it.

As she did, her eyes welled with tears.

Inside lay a pendant adorned with gemstones, its surface showing signs of wear. Whether these marks were the result of years passing or the scars of a fateful car accident was unclear.

The pendant could still be opened.

At its center was an intricate design of a rose and a nightingale. The lower left corner held an engraving, a small character spelling "Loraine."

Loraine's finger traced the engraving, emotions surging, tears threatening to spill from her eyes.

Among the possessions left behind by her parents, she recognized her mother's handwriting in that delicate inscription. The character had been penned by her mother's hand.

A vision of her parents came to her, their faces glowing with joy as they carved her name onto the pendant and placed it around her infant neck – a symbol of their boundless love and hope.

Their love must have been immense. Even in their last moments, they had fought with everything they had to protect her.

Finally, the dam broke, and tears cascaded silently down Loraine's cheeks. Clutching the necklace to her heart, she seemed to reach across the chasm of time to embrace her mother once more.

The subordinate who had brought the necklace stood in respectful silence, eyes averted, allowing Loraine her private moment of grief and remembrance.

Soon, Loraine regained her composure and handed the necklace to the waiting subordinate.

"Have it repaired. Regardless of the cost, find the best artisans to ensure it's restored to its original state," she instructed.

The subordinate nodded, taking the necklace with a sense of purpose, departing to fulfill Loraine's wishes.

Loraine lingered at the hospital entrance, giving the redness in her eyes time to fade before returning to Marco's room.

She had been away for a while, pondering what Rowan and Wesley might have been discussing with Marco. As she stood by the door, poised to push it open, Marco's words reached her ears.

"I am willing to marry into the Torres family."

Her hand froze, stopped in mid-motion by the gravity of what she had just heard.

Could it be true? What had she just overheard?