

## Chapter 799 The Oddity

At first, Florence was stunned, and then she became furious.

She could hardly believe what Tillie had just said to her! Even though she had been polite enough to her, Tillie, whom she considered as nothing but a servant, had dared to scold her!

Remembering that Grady would go to Zodiac to compete for the position of heir of the Cruz family, Florence lost any fear or respect she had for Tillie and instead shouted at her angrily, "Tillie, are you taking the side of strangers and even scolding me on their behalf? Have you forgotten that you are just a servant?!"

Tillie hated to hear this. In the main branch of the Cruz family, even servants had dignity, not to mention someone like her who was more like a mother to Ariadna!

Immediately, she retorted angrily, "Mrs. Cruz, don't you know that in Zodiac, even the patriarchs of prominent families dare not speak to me like that? Even if I am a servant, I am the one who has direct access to Miss Cruz and the main Cruz family. You are just from a branch of the family. You can't compare yourself with me!"

Florence was so angry to see that Tillie had dared to shout back at her that she almost rushed at her, but Grady stopped her just in time.

It had never occurred to Grady that things would turn out like this. For him, it had been very painful to quarrel with Loraine and Marco. Now, he and Florence were being humiliated by a servant of the Cruz family.

With a look of shame on his face, Grady said to Florence, "Mom, stop it. Let's go."

Florence turned around and glared at him. Then she turned her attention back to Tillie and said angrily, "You're just a menial servant. Wait and see. When we get to Zodiac, we'll definitely fire you!"

"Fire me?" Tillie sneered.

Florence thought Tillie was scared, so she raised her head proudly and said, "Yes, we'll fire you. In order to avoid that, you should know what to do. If you want to continue to stay in the Cruz family, you must drive these two people out of here immediately!"

But Tillie's response was an eye roll. She had always taken advantage of her closeness to the Cruz family, using it to bully others, but she would never allow anyone to do the same to her or order her around in the name of the Cruz family.

Worse still, the idiotic Florence had not only been speaking like a madwoman, she had also seriously offended Loraine!

In order to be healthy, Ariadna desperately needed the robot Loraine had lent them. If Florence continued to talk rubbish and annoy Loraine to the extent that she changed her mind about the robot, Tillie would never forgive her. In fact, she would deal with Florence ruthlessly.

It would be a reasonable thing to do and even the patriarch of the Cruz family would not blame her.

With this in mind, Tillie decided to make herself very clear to Florence. "Mrs. Cruz, you are just from a branch of the Cruz family, so there are things you may not understand. In the entire Cruz family, except for Miss Cruz, only the patriarch of

the family can decide my fate. You have no right whatsoever to tell me what to do!"

Florence promptly replied through gritted teeth, "My son has made a great contribution to save Ariadna's life. Even the head of the family will be grateful to us, so you can't talk to me like that!"

Tillie rolled her eyes and yawned as if to say Florence was spewing nonsense. Then she said to her, "In fact, I would have forgotten something very important if not that you had just reminded me. I came here to tell you that you and your son can both leave right now."

Florence was shocked to hear this. "What do you mean?" she asked with a gasp. "Are you saying this because Loraine has bribed you? You can't possibly be serious."

"Well, I am," Tillie shrugged. "After all, your family is not that close to the main Cruz family. If it was, you wouldn't be in a small place like Vagow."

Florence opened her mouth to respond, but Tillie beat her to it again, "You've been making trouble for so long. Enough is enough. If you insist on making a scene outside Miss Cruz's ward, I'll report what happened today to the head of the family."

Florence's face turned pale and she murmured in disbelief, "This is impossible. How could this be happening?"

Meanwhile, Grady was feeling highly embarrassed by this, but he was also a little surprised.

After all, when he came here, Florence kept telling him he would be a match and this made him believe that he could go to Zodiac through this opportunity.

But it turned out that they were wrong.

With contempt in her eyes, Tillie brought out the result of the test and showed it to them, saying sarcastically, "Here's the result. Don't blame me for being against you. It's your own fault!"

When Florence looked at the result and found that what Tillie said was true, her eyes went blank and she almost fainted. But almost immediately, anger swept over her.

She and Grady had come to be of help to Ariadna so early in the morning, and this was all they got? They were being humiliated by a servant!

She was just about to lose her temper and attack Tillie, but Grady quickly held her and said in a trembling voice, "Mom, let's go. Don't make a fool of yourself."

This time, he didn't just tell her. He made sure to hold her tight and forcefully take her away.

But as they passed by Loraine, he paused for a moment and hesitated. Finally, he murmured softly, "I'm sorry."

Then he left with Florence in a hurry.

Loraine watched them leave with mixed feelings in her heart.

But Tillie snorted with disdain, "This boy has the blood of the Cruz family in his veins. That's why he is a little smart. He knows if they don't leave, I would ask someone to drive them away!"

But when she finally remembered that Marco and Loraine were present, her attitude changed greatly and she became very respectful. "Mr. Bryant, Miss Torres, I'm sorry to disturb you. I have to continue to contact other members of the Cruz family to come get tested so we can see if they're a match. Please

excuse me."

With that, Tillie turned and left. Loraine was surprised at this and she turned to whisper to Marco, "Why is Tillie so respectful today? I was expecting that she would mock me, but she just left without even one bad word. That's strange."



## Chapter 800 Ariadna's Uncle

Marco also felt it was strange.

This was not the first time they had met Tillie. They knew that it was very much unlike her to be so humble and even politely excuse herself from their presence.

Even when Loraine threatened to withdraw the surgical robot, Tillie had not been as docile as she was now.

The change in her attitude seemed to come after she saw Marco.

Marco noticed that. He wondered exactly why this had happened, but he just couldn't figure it out. After thinking for a moment, he said, "Maybe it's because of Ariadna. They're so close to carrying out the surgery, so Tillie is scared to offend you because she doesn't want you to change your mind about the robot, which would make it impossible to carry out the operation."

Loraine nodded in silence. Though she still had some doubts about this explanation, she had no choice but to accept it because she just couldn't think of any other one.

Perhaps it might just be that Tillie had finally learned to behave as a result of the bitter lessons she had taught her several times in the past.

At this point, Loraine and Marco suddenly caught sight of something. A nurse was wheeling Ariadna back to the ward.

Loraine quickly jumped to her feet and rushed up to meet them.

But to her surprise, she found that Ariadna's eyes were red. It seemed she had been crying.

Loraine felt very nervous. She feared that Ariadna had found out that Grady was not a match.

If none of her relatives turned out to be a match, it would not be easy to find a suitable match elsewhere.

Loraine knew that though the Cruz family was large and had many branches, Ariadna had very few relatives. Since Grady had turned out not to be a match, there was a good chance that the same would happen to the others.

She could only imagine what was going through Ariadna's mind now. The poor girl must feel like there was no hope.

Loraine just stayed silent because she didn't know how she could comfort her.

But Ariadna forced a smile to her face and said to her, "Lorrie, thank you for coming to support me, but..."

She lowered her head with a bitter smile on her face and tears on her eyelashes. Then she went on, "I was scared about having to meet that cousin of mine, but now, I don't need to meet him anymore. Anyway, I'm sorry that you came here in vain."

Loraine knew that Ariadna was pretending to be strong and this made her feel even sadder. She took her hand and said to her in a gentle tone, "Ariadna, don't give up hope. Tillie has already gone to contact other people. I'll also look for someone that can help. There must be someone who's a match and we'll find that person."

When Ariadna heard the confidence in Loraine's voice, the tears on her long eyelashes finally rolled down her cheeks.



She wanted to pretend to be strong. She had thought that she could now accept death after so many years of illness.

But she found out that she had overestimated herself. When she heard that there was still hope for her to live, she couldn't restrain her joy. That was why she was so depressed when the hope was lost again.

Now, Loraine's gentle comfort made it impossible for her to pretend, and she promptly burst into tears. "Lorrie, am I destined to die young?" she sobbed. "I know it's difficult to find a match, but the truth is that if none of them turns out to be a match, then no one else will. You borrowed such an expensive surgical robot because of me, but now, I can't use it."

She tried to reduce her sobbing and wipe her tears, but the harder she tried, the more tears she shed.

Ariadna was a remarkable young girl. Despite knowing that she might not survive, she didn't complain. Instead, she felt guilty about the fact that she might be causing stress to others.

The others in the ward were silent. Tillie had tears in her eyes which she quickly wiped. Even Marco, who had a prejudice against the Cruz family, was sad.

Now that he had seen Ariadna, he finally understood why Loraine was so determined to help her. Compared with most other children from big families, Ariadna was very different.

Meanwhile, Loraine kept caressing the girl's head to comfort her. After a long time, Ariadna finally calmed down and said in embarrassment, "I'm sorry, Lorrie. Thank you for comforting me. I'm much better now."

Then she wiped her face and looked at the others in the ward. When she saw Marco, she was surprised.



But she quickly recovered herself and asked Loraine in a low voice, "Lorrie, is this the man?"

This was the first time that Ariadna was seeing Marco face-to-face. In the past, she had seen him either through a curtain or from afar.

Having been through a lot, Marco now looked more mature and steady than before.

He had long been a topic of conversation between Loraine and Ariadna, but when Ariadna asked her about Marco right there in front of him, Loraine blushed as she nodded in the affirmative.

"He looks great," Ariadna said. "If that accident had not happened to my uncle's family, my cousin who's about the same age as him would still be alive today. You know, my father has been sick before, so he can't donate bone marrow to me. It would have been great if that cousin of mine was alive. He would have saved me with his donation."

The uncle she was referring to was not a distant relative, but a member of the main family. In fact, he was the current head of the Cruz family!

Tillie's heart skipped a beat when she heard what Ariadna had said. She couldn't help but look up at Marco, who had an expressionless look on his face.

Loraine, on the other hand, was totally oblivious of what Tillie was thinking. She just continued to comfort Ariadna, saying, "Don't worry. We still have time. We will definitely find someone that can help you."

By now, Marco had noticed Tillie's intense gaze and he broke into a frown.

## Chapter 801 Laura Was Captured

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When Loraine finally returned from the hospital, a look of worry and concern took over her face.

While she was at the hospital, she had kept her worries hidden because she didn't want to affect Ariadna's mood, even though deep down in her heart, she was far from feeling at ease.

After all, she had been involved in Ariadna's situation from the very beginning, and together, they had experienced a rollercoaster of emotions until they successfully secured the surgical robot.

Now that there was a new obstacle in front of them, Loraine couldn't help but feel very uneasy.

Fully aware of her concerns, Marco poured her a glass of warm water. "There will be a solution, so don't worry too much," he said to her in a reassuring tone.

Loraine took the glass of water and rested her head on the table with a bitter expression on her face as she spoke out her worries. "There are hardly any young people in the Cruz family, especially those of Ariadna's age group. The few that are available are not even close to the main family. I doubt the chances of finding a match among them will be high. Even if there is a potential candidate who might be a match, Ariadna may not have that much time left."

Hence, searching for a match randomly could be a waste time.

Lorraine heaved a sigh of frustration, and Marco watched her helplessly.

Even though he couldn't think of a way he could help her, he still held her gently and talked to her comfortingly, "You've done your best already. From this point onward, we can only rely on fate. Even if there's nothing more you can do, no one can blame you."

Lorraine nestled closer to him and leaned on his shoulder. "I'm just feeling sentimental," she sighed. "I truly wish everyone around me could be healthy and happy, without ever having to go through something like this."

In the face of death, everything seemed small and fragile. Since the last time Aldo had health issues, Lorraine had become even more concerned about the well-being of those around her.

"Yeah, I feel the same way," Marco said as he held her in his arms.

But no matter what, life had to go on. While the search for a suitable match was ongoing, Lorraine had to return to work.

Meanwhile, Marco stayed at home and continued to work hard on his rehabilitation, yearning more than ever to recover fully so he could stand shoulder to shoulder with Lorraine again.

One morning, when Marco had just finished a set of exercises, his phone which he had placed nearby began to ring.

He was still panting, with sweat streaming down his well-defined muscles when the call came in. He reached for a dry towel and used it to wipe his face before glancing at his phone. He saw that the number calling was the one the police had given him when he reported the case involving Liza.

Why would the police be contacting him now? he wondered.

Could it be...

Marco's expression grew serious as a thought entered his head. Without wasting time, he answered the call immediately. On the other end of the line, the police officer went straight to the point, "Mr. Bryant, the suspect, Laura Bryant, has finally been captured, but she insists on meeting with you. She claims she has, in her words, a mind-blowing secret to tell you."

Clearly, the police officer was also puzzled by her dramatic choice of words.

"What secret?" Marco asked in surprise and curiosity. But then, he quickly changed his mind. "In fact, I don't even want to know. Just investigate her crimes according to the law. There's no need to inform me of anything."

The police officer felt even more awkward when he heard this, but he tried his best to explain, "Mr. Bryant, the suspect said the secret is related to your identity. She also said that since your grandmother and father have both passed away, no one except her knows the truth. So, according to her, you might regret it if you don't come."

But Marco's facial expression remained impassive. In his mind, he was wondering what Laura was up to now.

Since she had made a statement with such strong portent, he decided to meet with her, just to hear what she had to say.

Inside the detention center, Laura was seated with handcuffs on her hands and her head lowered. She was dressed in tattered clothing, making her look utterly disheveled.

Marco stood with an expressionless face on the other side of



the iron bars, staring at her in silence. Just then, Laura seemed to sense something and promptly looked up.

When she saw that it was Marco, her eyes lit up and she rushed to the bars like a starving animal, screaming at the top of her lungs, "Marco, I'll give you all the remaining money. Just please get me out of here! I don't want to go to jail!"

Marco frowned and responded in a cold tone, "Is this why you called me here? If so, forgive me for not continuing the conversation with you. Moreover, I'm just a penniless outcast in your eyes. So I can't help you."

But Laura kept pleading desperately, "Then please go beg Loraine to save me! Marco, don't forget that it was my husband who brought you home and added you to our family. If not for us, you would've been dead a long time ago. You can't be so heartless as to forget all that!"

"Enough!" Marco scolded her. "I've long since repaid any favor I received from the Bryant family. This predicament of yours is simply of your own making! I don't have anything else to tell you apart from the fact that I won't save you!"

He should have known better when he heard that Laura had a secret to tell him. Apparently, she was just trying to leverage on their past ties as usual.

Marco was thoroughly disappointed to say the least. Without another word, he turned and began to leave.

Laura, in her desperation, shook the iron bars frantically, screaming after him, "Marco, you jinxed child... you bastard! The Bryant family is in this mess because of you!"

Marco hesitated for a moment. Then he turned around and looked at her with a cold gaze.

Laura was still muttering angry words, her mouth twisted in a manic smile. "Marco, you're a curse! It's because of you that Winfred went to Zodiac and died when he returned. It's all your fault! If he had not had anything to do with you, he wouldn't have died, and the Bryant family wouldn't have fallen! I only wish I had strangled you when you were a child!"



## Chapter 802 The Mystery Of His Identity

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It appeared that Laura had completely lost her mind. It was unclear how she had survived these past few days. Her clothes were tattered and filthy, and she was emitting a strong stench like a homeless person that had not bathed for a long period.

She gazed at Marco, cackling madly, her eyes filled with bitterness. She resembled a hidden rat lurking in a sewer as she incessantly repeated one phrase over and over again, "You only bring misfortune to those around you!"

Marco's frown got even deeper and he glared at her in anger. Yet, his inner thoughts couldn't help but stir.

Was it true that he only brought misfortune to those around him?

And... did Winfred truly die because of him?

He only had vague memories of the father he never really knew, but he had often heard Liza sadly talking about how Winfred had brought him home, only to meet a tragic end shortly afterward.

When Laura noticed the change in Marco's expression, she burst into laughter. Then suddenly, she looked around furtively, assuming a mysterious demeanor as if she was about to divulge a secret. "Marco, let me tell you a secret," she whispered, beckoning on him to come closer.

But without even waiting for him to approach, she blurted out,



"You're a monster! A cold-blooded and heartless monster that caused the downfall of the Bryant family! You only bring harm to those around you, and you will surely face retribution one day!"

Marco frowned. He was starting to realize that taking Laura's ramblings seriously was a mistake. It seemed she had lost grip of her sanity.

"You've gone mad. Just stay in your cell and stop causing harm to others," he told her directly.

Laura's expression changed instantly and she shouted at him in fury, "I'm not mad! Everything I said is true. Winfred was planning to meet with a big shot when he went to Zodiac. But after bringing you into our home, he didn't live long. It's all because of you!"

Marco pursed his lips and kept quiet. Without responding to her ramblings, he turned and left.

But as he went, Laura's words continued to echo in his mind, despite his efforts to forget them.

Had Winfred really brought him back from Zodiac?

Walking alone on the street, Marco had a thoughtful expression on his face as he pondered over Laura's statements. He hadn't called for a cab, and before long, the slight pain from his injured leg reminded him of the fact that he was walking. But he just continued walking as if the pain was necessary to keep him clear-headed.

From what Laura had said, could it be that Zodiac was his birthplace?

Winfred had established Bryant Group in Vagow and built it up to a stage where it had a significant presence in the city. Yet,



according to Laura, the person Winfred had gone to meet in Zodiac was even greater than Winfred – great enough to offer Winfred an even brighter future.

Winfred was already the chairman of a large corporation. What could be a brighter future than that? Marco wondered.

Suddenly, he remembered Tillie, the elderly woman that worked for the Cruz family in Zodiac. When they first met, she was so shocked that she called him master.

Could it be that he resembled someone from the Cruz family?

Moreover, it had to be a striking resemblance to make Tillie slip up.

There were so many questions and Marco couldn't find the answers, but he had a vague feeling that there was a lot to uncover in Zodiac.

As he kept thinking about the issue, he began to draw closer to the idea that his relationship with the Cruz family might not be ordinary.

He had always been remarkably intelligent and mature beyond his years, and now, this gift of his had come in handy. Before long, he connected certain clues that had previously been overlooked.

For example, the Cruz family branch in Vagow had moved there only after he was brought to the Bryant family.

Grady's father, who was the head of this branch, had a lot of respect for Marco, even when he was just a child.

A patriarch having such respect for a child might seem absurd to outsiders, but Marco's keen intuition told him that there was more to the situation than met the eye.

Could it be that Winfred had taken him from the Cruz family in Zodiac?

If that were the case, what kind of relationship did he have with the Cruz family?

As Marco's mind kept racing in its search for answers, he brought out his phone and sent a message to his subordinate. "Find out immediately if there was any contact between Winfred Bryant and the Cruz family in Zodiac before his death."

It didn't take long for his subordinate to send a reply, saying, "Yes, there seems to be a connection, boss. Do you want us to dig deeper?"

Marco knew that a deeper investigation might reveal the answers he sought sooner rather than later. But he was also worried about what it might bring up.

He stopped by the side of the road and sat down on a bench. After taking a few deep breaths, he stared at his phone, silently questioning himself.

Should he order the investigation to be continued?

Even if he found that he had a link to the Cruz family, what would it change?

Would he abandon his current life just to seek out those so-called relatives?

Certainly not. Regardless of the Cruz family's reasons for abandoning him, the fact remained that he'd had no connection with them for over two decades now, and he couldn't imagine leaving Loraine behind just to go search for members of the Cruz family.

His current life was fulfilling enough, and he was content to remain "poor". So, he would just stay where he was.

After putting all these into perspective, Marco made up his mind and sent a response to his subordinate. "No need to continue the investigation."

Then he deleted the entire conversation from his phone.

After all these years of being separated from the Cruz family, he believed that the separation should remain in place permanently.

