

## Chapter 809 Impolite Guests

Marco's unexpected donor match had caught everyone off guard, including Loraine. Yet, for those eyeing a closer bond with the Cruz family, this development proved to be a hindrance to their ambitions.

In the gathered crowd, some shared this frustration, with one bold enough to openly challenge the situation.

He suspected Loraine hadn't truly found a donor for Ariadna so swiftly, and implied that she was trying to keep them from interacting with the Cruz family, so she made a public announcement declaring Marco as the donor, but privately, she might keep looking for the match, later placing the credit on Marco and paving the way for his resurgence.

Loraine's expression hardened, her brows knitting together as she focused intently on the instigator. "Are you Tyler Gibson of BlueSky Company? Do you stand by your words?"

Caught off guard by Loraine's recognition and direct approach, Tyler's face flickered with panic before he steadied himself, defiantly responding, "What's this, Miss Torres? Trying to scare me?"

Loraine's laugh was soft but pointed. "This isn't about intimidation, Mr. Gibson. It's about being answerable for your words. I'm accountable for mine. But you, spreading baseless gossip and slander, can you handle the fallout?"

Tyler stuttered, "I... I wasn't gossiping or slandering. I was just expressing doubts. Are you so formidable that nobody can question you?"

The crowd's buzz turned into a fiery debate, with several voices backing Tyler's sentiments, inflating his confidence.

As soon as Loraine ushered these guests into her house, she had been nothing but hospitable. But their lack of respect led her to abandon any semblance of cordiality. Her voice took on a frosty tone as she addressed them, "Ladies and gentlemen, you were brought into this drawing room as friends by my family. To those who came with true intentions to help, even if your efforts bear no fruit, you will receive my deepest appreciation and courtesy. Yet, for those harboring hidden agendas, expect no leniency from me!"

With her declaration made, Beal, previously amiable, now stood beside her silently, a sardonic smile on his face. He signaled subtly to a few bodyguards.

Their entry changed the room's mood immediately. A palpable tension hung in the air, silencing everyone.

Tyler, meanwhile, simmered with unresolved anger. He bit back his frustration in secret. His business, dealing in international trade, had suffered significant setbacks due to a clash with the Solar Company, driving him nearly to despair.

Learning of a chance to gain favor with the esteemed Cruz family in Zodiac, he had hastened here, hoping to find a way to navigate his difficulties. Even if he couldn't forge a strong bond with the Cruz family, aligning with any wealthy family present could alleviate his financial issues.

Yet, unforeseen circumstances had led to him antagonizing the Torres family directly.

Scanning the room, Tyler gauged the varied reactions of those around, weighing his next move.

He knew some of them shared his discomfort regarding Loraine's statement. But he was the first to voice their collective apprehensions.

Now that he had offended the Torres family, he decided to stand his ground and continue to voice his discontent to Loraine, possibly rallying some individuals to support his cause.

Resolved, he retorted, "Did I say something wrong? Isn't it rather coincidental that such an improbable donor match was found so swiftly? And it's conveniently someone in your circle. How do you explain that?"

Tyler turned around to face the group and blurted out, "Can any of you actually believe such luck exists in this world? I've heard even the Cruz family can't find a match. Yet, how did Miss Torres's lover, Marco, who knows nothing of his own lineage, become the favored one? This is..."

Before Tyler could finish his words, Loraine slammed her teacup down on the table with a darkened expression. "Tyler, what do you think you're doing here?"

Had these guests not been from Vagow's prestigious families, Loraine wouldn't have thought twice about throwing them out.

Yet, Tyler, reckless and grinning, pressed on, "Miss Torres, does my accuracy upset you? Have you found a match and are trying to shift the credit to support that good-for-nothing?"

He feigned concern, shaking his head and clucking his tongue. "What's so great about him? Why are you so obsessed with him?"

Loraine was livid, but Tyler, relishing her reaction, seemed even more self-satisfied. He licked his lips, sneering, "If it's just a handsome face you want, Miss Torres, I'm not too shabby. And I know many young men far superior to him."

The men in the crowd laughed and jeered, while the women, like Loraine, scowled in disgust.

Beal's expression grew darker. Such disrespect had never been tolerated by the Torres family.

Not waiting for Loraine's order, he gestured to the bodyguards to intervene.

Tyler, oblivious to the peril, had deeply offended the Torres, yet hoped to fix everything by winning over Loraine.

With this thought, he boldly ripped open his shirt, smirking. "See for yourself, Miss Torres. I'm far better at pleasing than Marco..."

Shocked and infuriated, Loraine exclaimed, shielding her eyes, "What the hell are you doing?"



## Chapter 810 Teaching Him A Lesson

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The drawing room was in total disarray, with some instigating trouble amidst the chaos and others genuinely petrified.

Tyler found joy in this turmoil, chuckling loudly. "Loraine, you..."

His words were cut short, transforming into a chilling scream. Blood and a shattered tooth erupted from his mouth.

Amid the panicking crowd, a hand strong as iron clamped around Tyler's neck. Before he could comprehend what was happening, a flurry of punches pummeled him relentlessly.

Tyler's screams of pain echoed through the room. In the fleeting moments of respite from the assault, he caught sight of his attacker, whose face was as sinister as a demon's.

It was Marco!

Tyler's eyes bulged in fear as he stuttered, "You, you were supposed to be incapacitated! How are you still fighting?"

Marco's answer was another devastating blow.

Blood flew in all directions, stunning everyone into a rapid retreat, forming a ring around the brutal encounter.

Tyler, on the verge of losing consciousness, saw stars in his eyes. Marco looked at him with an icy stare, as if he were nothing but a dead man. Releasing his grip, Marco casually flung Tyler aside, his voice cold and contemptuous. "A repulsive



scoundrel! His words are filthier than the mud under a dog's paws."

The spectators stood in horror and awe, their breaths held in fear.

Though Tyler's sharp tongue had offended Loraine, Marco's merciless beating was too much, nearly costing Tyler his life.

Loraine, pale and shaken, quickly came to Marco's side, her voice laced with concern. "Your wounds are still healing. Why bother with this lowlife?"

Still enraged, Marco clenched his teeth and hissed, "He doesn't even deserve the mercy of death."

Beal, his expression grim, nodded decisively and glared at Tyler. He ordered the bodyguards, "Why are you just standing there? Why haven't you removed this bastard? Must I do it myself?"

Several guards, ashamed, hurriedly picked up Tyler, handling him like a discarded doll, and swiftly threw him out.

Boiling with rage, Beal thought how things could have turned sinister if Marco hadn't stepped in. That vile man might have ruined Loraine's good name.

Meanwhile, Beal's respect for Marco grew.

Despite his injury, Marco stood firm to protect Loraine, proving himself a dependable man.

Marco's frosty stare lingered on Tyler as he departed, his eyes brimming with lethal fury that sent chills down Tyler's spine. Fear overwhelmed Tyler so much that he wet himself.

In the drawing room, while everyone was still shaken, looks of contempt crossed their faces.

At this point, aligning with Tyler meant challenging the Torres family. It was an unthinkable act.

Most found Tyler's actions not only unhelpful but downright idiotic.

Although Loraine was initially scared, she soon regained her composure and comforted Marco. "Was that man even worth your trouble? You could have been hurt."

Marco's lips tightened. "I don't think my actions are enough for his offense against you," he responded icily.

He gestured to the bodyguards, instructing them to stop. Towering over the cowering Tyler, Marco said coldly, "I recall you calling my name."

Tyler, tears and snot mingling on his face, deeply regretted not losing consciousness. He stuttered, "I misspoke. I'm nothing compared to you. Please, have mercy! It won't happen again!"

Marco's reply was a chilling whisper. "Perhaps giving BlueSky Company a month was overly generous. Let's make it two days."

Tyler's plea for mercy halted as he looked up in disbelief. "How... How do you know? Are you..."

But before he could finish, shock overcame him, and he fainted from fear.

Marco's expression showed slight contempt. Such a worthless man had caused a commotion in front of Loraine. He regretted not crushing the company sooner.

But it was only a matter of time. Originally, he had allowed them a month to compete with Solar Company, but now even two days seemed too long.

Marco couldn't bear to watch this failure. "Take him out. Let's not distress Loraine further," he commanded the bodyguards coldly.

Beal came over, looking solemn. Marco cleared his throat. "Beal, let's keep this from Aldo for now. No need to worry him."

After a moment's hesitation, Beal nodded in agreement. "Alright, I understand."





## Chapter 811 Shopping Together

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Tyler's ordeal, with Marco's harsh punishment, served as a stark warning to those contemplating causing trouble.

Loraine, abandoning her usual politeness, surrounded herself with bodyguards and asked in a cold tone, "Does anyone else have doubts about the compatibility findings?"

The onlookers, exchanging looks, shook their heads in succession.

Some prominent individuals connected to the Torres family approached Loraine with smiles.

One clarified to Loraine, "You've declared the results as definitive, so who are we to question them? We're here just to offer any assistance we can! Regarding that Tyler, I'm clueless about him. He's nothing but trash."

Another added in agreement, "He probably showed up here because his company is going under. His presence even stains the floor of this place!"

Laughter erupted from the crowd, swiftly dismissing the earlier disruptors as if they were now insignificant.

Loraine, perceptive of their true intentions yet finding their outward manners tolerable, didn't bother to address them. She managed a courteous smile before sending them away.

The bodyguards, under the guise of friendliness, escorted the

guests out, leaving no trace of their presence.

After their departure, Loraine expressed her disdain with a cold snort. "They're all hiding their true intentions. They are nothing but sly old foxes."

Beal, feeling responsible, apologized, "I shouldn't have let them in."

Loraine, dismissing his concern, directed someone to clean the soiled floor in the drawing room before departing with Marco.

Once alone, she queried Marco about Tyler's outburst. "He seemed quite upset. What was that about?"

Marco, maintaining his calm, answered, "Just some unpleasant words, nothing you should bother with."

Loraine decided not to delve further into the incident, though a sense of disgust lingered.

Observing her unease, Marco tenderly took her hand, voicing his concern, "How about we step out for some breather?"

In contrast to the earlier encounter with the oily man, Marco's gentle, caring touch was a welcome shift. Loraine nodded, her smile bright, yet hesitated, querying, "But your leg, how is it?"

Marco guided her hand to his stomach and cleared his throat, confidently stating, "I've been diligent with my exercises and walking is no longer an issue for me."

Beneath her hand, she could discern the solid, well-defined muscles of his abs.

Instantly flushing, Loraine jerked her hand back, chiding him sternly, "You're such a flirt! I was just concerned about your leg. I did not want to feel up your abs!"

Marco, feigning innocence, replied, "I just wanted to show you I'm fit and ready to accompany my girlfriend for a walk."

Despite Marco's increasingly bold behavior, Loraine could only sigh in mild frustration.

Yet, his recent demonstration of fitness hinted that he truly was capable of walking without trouble.

Eager to get him out after his prolonged confinement due to injury, Loraine agreed to his suggestion.

Since their reconciliation, their only outing had been a brief visit to a street food market. They hadn't experienced shopping together like an ordinary couple until this moment.

Reaching the shopping mall, they naturally intertwined hands.

Feeling his grasp, Loraine's eyes wandered briefly, savoring this new experience.

Though they'd shared private moments and tender words, openly holding hands felt unexpectedly shy.

Soon, Marco's grip grew firmer, their fingers locking snugly.

Loraine, maintaining her calm, suggested, "How about I pick out some new clothes for you?"

Having always dressed in finely tailored suits, Marco's recent casual shift to simple shirts hadn't gone unnoticed by Loraine. She was keen to add some fresh attire to his wardrobe.

Marco beamed, meeting her gaze, looking as pleased as a pampered pet.

Their earlier shyness seemed to dissolve, and they walked closely, barely an inch apart. Marco murmured, "You pick out

what you like later, and I'll handle the bags."

Loraine's smile widened, relishing the thought of not having to carry her shopping bags.

While exploring the mall's first floor, they huddled together in the elevator. Suddenly, Marco's eyes darted in a specific direction, his expression growing slightly troubled.



## Chapter 812 Being Watched

Loraine, snugly pressed against him, immediately sensed his slight shift and asked, "Is something wrong?"

Marco, keeping his cool, put the shopping bags on his other hand and pulled her closer to him. In a low tone, he murmured, "I've got this inkling that we're being followed."

Loraine, initially surprised, swiftly masked her reaction. Feigning ignorance, she smiled and playfully responded, "Oh? Let's see who it could be."

The pair, no strangers to enemies, were bemused by such a brazen tailing attempt, speculating on the audacity of their pursuer.

Moreover, Marco's recent infrequent outings highlighted the likelihood that their stalker had been surveilling the Torres household for a while.

Marco nodded in concurrence, and then resumed their light-hearted conversation and laughter, deliberately disregarding their watcher as they wandered through the mall.

Eventually, near a cafe, Loraine suggested, "I'm feeling a bit worn out. How about a break in there?"

The cafe, encased in clear glass, offered a panoramic view, making discreet surveillance quite challenging.

Selecting a seat with an expansive view, Loraine purposely remarked, "This is a perfect chance for your rehab exercises. Why don't you order?"

Marco, pleased, took the menu and headed to the counter. He soon returned, balancing coffee and pastries with ease.

Meanwhile, Loraine subtly surveyed their surroundings. She knew Marco's movements would unintentionally reveal their follower.

Her intuition paid off when she spotted their target upon Marco's return.

In a nearby clothing store, two men in baseball caps, pretending to distribute flyers, were covertly watching them. Each of Marco's movements caused one to adjust his stance for a better view of Marco.

Loraine's expression darkened slightly as she discreetly averted her eyes. The men, uncertain if spotted, hesitated, then dipped their caps lower, but stayed put.

As Marco offered her a piece of cheesecake, he quietly inquired, "Did you spot them?"

Loraine affirmed softly, glancing down at her phone. Her fingers deftly tapped out a message. "Second floor, downtown mall, opposite Starbucks, two suspects. Trace their backgrounds."

As the two men followed them at a distance without any direct confrontation, Loraine was not inclined to let their surveillance pass without repercussions. She was fearless, and her lips curled provocatively. She deliberately let her eyes wander over them time and again.

Once, her gaze met one of the men's eyes. The encounter visibly drained the color from his face, even under his baseball cap. He stood rooted to the spot, paralyzed with fear.

Trying to hide her amusement, Loraine turned to Marco and remarked, "Seems they were stingy with their recruitment. They've got a couple of fools on our tail."

Marco responded with a faint smile, letting Loraine playfully taunt their shadows.

Both he and Loraine felt a natural sense of fearlessness against those hidden in the dark. Besides, in the heart of the city, anyone with bad intentions would think twice.

Loraine's casual yet pointed awareness left their followers torn between the fear of being exposed and the uncertainty of their situation, forcing them to continue their hesitant pursuit.

The two men were left unsure if they had been spotted. When Loraine and Marco exited the cafe, the men hesitated briefly before begrudgingly resuming their follow.

Loraine, noticing their stubbornness, deliberately chose a winding path. She occasionally stepped into elevators, amused as the two followed them with great effort up escalators. Then, she'd swiftly vanish around a corner, leaving the men dumbfounded and startled, only to reappear nonchalantly.

Marco held the bags, cheerfully joining her in her playful antics.

When they'd had their fill of entertainment, Loraine calmly steered Marco back to the Torres's house, noting that the men had ceased their pursuit.

"They've got some brains, at least, not to trail us here," Loraine commented. "Had they followed us home, I wouldn't have been so forgiving."

Still, she took a moment to instruct Beal, "Keep your eyes open around the mansion. Check for any strangers loitering around."

Beal instantly grasped the severity of her words, his face turning stern as he nodded and set off to make arrangements.

Despite the day-long tail, the men hadn't done much apart from being led on a wild goose chase by Loraine. This led her to believe they might not harbor any harmful intentions.

When she discussed this with Marco, he agreed with her point of view.

Just then, Loraine received a message from an underling who had been investigating the followers.

"We've identified them. They're from the Cruz family from Zodiac."

Perplexed, Loraine and Marco exchanged looks. Why would the Cruz family send people to trail them?

Could it be that they knew about the troublemakers who had recently arrived and decided to offer protection discreetly?





## Chapter 813 Clifford Cruz

At the same time, a middle-aged man was having a phone conversation outside Ariadna's ward.

The voice on the other end of the line said to him, "Mr. Cruz, we were discovered. He tricked us throughout the day, wandering around with us behind him."

The middle-aged man, who the other individual had referred to as Mr. Cruz, paused for a moment before replying in an indifferent tone, "Okay."

Then he approached the ward and stood by the window. He saw the girl that was lying on the bed inside and sighed softly, "No wonder he's my brother's child. Very clever fellow."

If Ariadna was awake, she would have recognized this middle-aged man with greying hair at his temples and gold-rimmed glasses as her biological father, Clifford Cruz.

When Clifford was younger, he was often seriously ill. He only had one daughter, but unfortunately, Ariadna was born with serious illnesses.

Now that she needed help with a stem cell donation, he couldn't help her because of his condition. All along, he had been very desperate until he heard that there was a young man in Vagow who was tested and found to be a suitable match.

What was more, there was a secret that only a few older members of the Cruz family knew. The young man that had turned out to be a match was likely a biological member of the Cruz family.

"Mr. Cruz," the man on the other end of the line suddenly said, knocking him out of his reverie, "since we've been exposed, to avoid any misunderstanding, should we tell them about the report?"

Clifford shook his head. Even though he thought that the young man could be a member of his family, he did not really believe it 100% just yet. So he said to his subordinate, "Even though the report proves that the young man is related to our family, no one can guarantee that the report is absolutely correct.

After all, our influence in Vagow is considerably smaller in comparison to Zodiac. We can't afford to jump to conclusions. If someone from the extended branch is trying to fabricate a lie that they had found the so-called eldest son of the Cruz family, it will be very unfavorable to Ariadna."

The subordinate found that Clifford's words made sense. He paused for a moment and said, "Well, we saw the young man today. He looked a lot like the master, but..."

"But what?" Clifford asked.

"But he seems to have nothing on his hands now. He's with a woman called Loraine Torres, carrying her bags and doing her bidding, just like... like a boy toy."

Clifford said with a frown, "After all, he was not raised by our family, so he has been tainted with the crude habits practiced in a small place like Vagow. If he is truly a member of the Cruz family, then it's a big shame for him to be kicked out of the Bryant family and live as a gigolo."

When the subordinate heard Clifford talking about these family secrets, he couldn't help but stay totally silent. He knew it was not his place to discuss such things with his boss.

Nevertheless, the secrets of the Cruz family seemed to be a lot greater than people like him had originally imagined.

Meanwhile, Clifford continued after pushing his glasses further up his nose, "Though he doesn't deserve to be in our family, there's a likelihood that he's the son of my brother. We can't just leave him outside. We have to bring him back and mould him to our standard. So, keep an eye on him. You'd better find a way to arrange a meeting between him and me."

"Okay, sir," his subordinate said and hung up. Clifford put the phone back into his pocket and his eyes darkened as he fell to thinking.

After a moment of contemplation, he breathed a sigh of relief and smiled to himself. "The more useless he is, the better. That way no one will be able to compete with Ariadna," he murmured.

Just then, from the corner of his eye, he saw something move. When he turned in that direction, he saw through the window that Ariadna had just woken up. His face instantly lit up in a happy smile. Quickly, he opened the door and walked in.

"Ariadna, are you awake?" he called out.

In the past two days, in preparation for the surgical operation, Ariadna had been undergoing all kinds of examinations. Apart from that, she spent most of her time asleep in bed. This was the second day Clifford had spent in Vagow, but it was the first time he had seen her awake.

He couldn't help but feel sad for his daughter, even though he seldom cared about his family, be it his wife or children.

The first time he looked carefully at his daughter was when he learned that she had a serious illness.

Like a typical father, he was heartbroken and determined to save his daughter at any cost.

But he was also extremely cold and detached. Even when he heard that his daughter was slowly dying from the disease, he did not drop his business and come to even take a look at her.

If not for the news about Marco, he would not have shown up in Vagow, even after Ariadna's operation had been completed.

Nevertheless, the sight of his tall figure made Ariadna's eyes go wide with surprise. "Dad! Why are you here?" she asked.

