

Chapter 830 The First Bracelet For Each Other

Loraine's surprise was palpable upon hearing Marco's words; she sensed an undertone of flirtation.

Well, since she was going to instruct Marco in the art of bracelet-making, his reference to himself as a student wasn't out of place.

Perhaps she was reading too much into it.

With a concerted effort, Loraine dismissed her wandering thoughts, nodded, took Marco's hand, and advised softly, "When pulling the thread through the bead, stay calm. You should..."

Her demeanor was the epitome of patience and gentleness, befitting of a fine teacher.

Her voice, soft and hushed, caressed Marco's ear, and as she moved, strands of her hair brushed against the nape of his neck and cheek.

Marco, meanwhile, was utterly captivated, his gaze not on the bracelet but fixated on Loraine's profile, mesmerized by her speaking lips, oblivious to the tickle against his skin.

As Loraine leaned in, her presence pressed lightly against his back, the thin barrier of their clothes doing little to mask the connection.

It was only the sharp sting in his hand that snapped Marco out of his reverie, his attention caught by Loraine's flustered glare,

her awareness of his distraction evident.

Feeling a twinge of guilt, Marco straightened and stammered, "Sorry, what were you saying? I..."

Loraine, her lips pursed in vexation and restraint, managed to hold back her irritation. She simply hummed and resumed the lesson.

Before long, they completed a string of beads. The burgundy agates laid against her skin were striking, captivating Marco so completely that he couldn't look away.

As he measured the bracelet, admiration flickered in his eyes. He couldn't help but exclaim, "Loraine, your beauty is unsurpassed, even enhancing the charm of these simple beads."

Loraine whined, "We're almost there. Stay attentive."

Marco grinned with a touch of silliness as he revealed his selected trinket. It turned out to be a rabbit figurine, but its demeanor exuded more confidence than a typical rabbit, resembling an adorable yet feisty creature.

He chuckled to himself, silently noting the charm's resemblance to Loraine, yet he dared not voice this observation.

Loraine grasped his implication instantly.

Indeed, she had harbored a similar sentiment upon selecting the wolf figurine.

Her gaze bore into Marco with such intensity that he couldn't help but liken her to the rabbit figurine at that moment. They often masqueraded as fierce creatures, though their nature was genuinely gentle and kind.

Although she shot Marco a glare, Loraine's surprise was

palpable. The rabbit and the wolf figures, indicative of a pair, were choices they had kept to themselves during the selection process.

She pondered whether their mutual decision was serendipitous or simply fated.

In due course, Marco completed the crafting of the bracelet.

Together, they approached the shop owner, requesting a final polish for his creation. It was then that Marco caught sight of Loraine's handiwork.

Her bracelet was undeniably more refined. By contrast, his seemed rudimentary, even with Loraine's instruction.

A mix of emotions crossed Marco's features, revealing a rare childlike stubbornness. He declared, determined, "I've grasped the technique now. I'll craft a better one for you!"

He aspired to present Loraine with nothing but the best, and this current attempt fell short of his standards. He even silently vowed to dedicate time to hone his skills, to present Loraine with an impeccable bracelet.

But Loraine interjected, extending the gleaming rabbit bracelet toward him. "Wear it for me."

Marco wavered momentarily but ultimately complied, affixing the bracelet to her wrist.

The once unpolished piece now dazzled on Loraine's wrist, as striking as red plum blossoms against snow.

Loraine admired the bracelet with a flick of her wrist and inquired, "What do you think?"

Marco responded with heartfelt admiration, "It's stunning!"

Chapter 830 The First Bracelet For Each Other  +120 Points at most

In his view, Loraine could don mere twine and still radiate beauty.

Beaming, Loraine coaxed, "Your turn. Give me your hand."

As Marco extended his arm, anticipation sparkled in his eyes, Loraine secured the wolf bracelet upon his wrist.

She then pressed her palm to his wrist and declared with pride, "This is the first bracelet I've made for someone else. Hence, the one you've given me should likewise be your first. Regardless of future bracelets' allure, none will hold the sentiment of the first one."



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Chapter 831 The Return Of Jennie

Marco adored the assertive spark in Loraine's gaze. Despite her persistence, he yielded gracefully, secretly vowing to craft an even lovelier and flawless bracelet for her someday.

The shopkeeper observed their tender scene with a knowing grin, prompting a flush of shyness in both Loraine and Marco. They completed their purchase and, clasping hands, hastened from the store.

Unbeknownst to them, the shopkeeper's smile lingered as she discreetly captured a snapshot of their departing figures with her phone.

Evening crept in by the time they concluded the bracelet-making procedure.

Loraine, having dispatched her pressing tasks ahead of time, found herself free of obligations. They chose to skip further shopping, opting instead for the comfort of home.

Arriving, they were greeted by silence. Home was unexpectedly empty.

Her uncles had recently resettled at home. Their absence by day was typical, yet now, even Aldo was nowhere to be found.

Aldo's spirits were high lately, his health visibly improving. While Loraine wasn't overly concerned, she was puzzled by his absence.

Upon inquiry, Beal informed her, "Mr. Torres is reveling at a gathering with a longtime companion and plans to remain away for a few days. Mr. Rowan has been dispatched on an assignment outside the city, his return not imminent. Mr. Wesley has been summoned to an international art exhibit."

Rowan and Wesley, men of commitment, had carved time from their bustling lives to be with their niece. Staying in Vagow was not always in their cards.

For Loraine, it was a joyous revelation that Aldo was rekindling friendships.

Since taking her home, Aldo had devoted most of his time to her welfare, his business dealings and old acquaintances taking a backseat.

Now, as elders poised to pass the baton to the younger generation and savor retirement, reconnecting with peers was beneficial for Aldo. Loraine wholeheartedly encouraged it.

After a reassuring conversation with Aldo about the particulars, she was at ease.

Reclining in bed, Loraine caressed the bracelet on her wrist, her smile brimming with contentment. The impulse to embrace the pillow and revel in her happiness was nearly irresistible.

Eager to share her elation, she snapped a few photos of the bracelet. As she pondered whom to send them to, her phone chimed with an incoming message.

The message came from Jennie, a friend she'd lost touch with for a while.

Jennie had been abroad for over six months. She only occasionally shared updates about her life and had been out of



touch otherwise. Presumably finished with her studies, she bombarded Loraine with five back-to-back voice messages.

Loraine played them and heard Jennie's energetic voice proclaim, "I'm finally done with my studies! You can't imagine the struggle I've endured these past months. I..."

Following her lengthy grievances, Jennie offered confidently, "Sweetheart, I want to gift you something special. What do you say to jewelry? My family's in the business. Would you prefer a necklace or a bracelet?"

Loraine listened patiently to each message, trying to soothe Jennie. Upon hearing the jewelry offer, she bit her lip, a smirk of slight conceit playing on her lips. She sent Jennie a bracelet's picture, replying, "Thank you, but I already own a bracelet."

Jennie responded instantly, "Oh my goodness, that's hideous. Where on earth did you get it?"

Loraine's smile vanished.

Jennie's voice followed, tinged with disbelief. "When did you start wearing such tacky jewelry? The design's fresh, but the materials look cheap. Did it cost more than ten dollars?"

Loraine, taking a deep breath, typed with emphasis, "It's beyond value! Marco made it for me!"

Shortly after, Jennie's call came through, her voice theatrically loud. "What? Marco made that for you?"

Jennie, out of the loop from her studies, was taken aback. "Why would Marco, the head of Bryant Group, make you such a cheap bracelet? It's nothing compared to what Jimmie gave me!"

Loraine, realizing Jennie was clueless, patiently explained

Marco's circumstances.

She then sighed, "He's with the Torres family now and doesn't have much money. But it's the thought behind the gift that counts, not its price."

Stunned, Jennie could only say, "I can't believe Jimmie didn't fill me in on such major news!"

Sensing an opportunity, Loraine's eyebrows arched playfully. "And why should he tell you? Seems like you and Jimmie are growing close. What's going on now?"



Chapter 832 Lust

Exposed and coughing harshly, Jennie couldn't hide her discomfort.

Loraine, unruffled, gently prodded, "Miss Fowler, you've spoken at length about him, two-thirds of your words, to be exact. Why not admit your feelings?"

Caught off-guard, Jennie murmured timidly, "When I return, we'll chat face-to-face. It's too complicated to explain over the phone."

With a burst of laughter, Loraine listened as Jennie hastily ended the call.

Once the line went dead, Loraine gazed at the phone, contemplative.

The potential romance between Jennie and Jimmie, although unexpected, wasn't entirely a shock.

Initially, Loraine's impression of Jimmie was less than favorable, fearing he'd deceive Jennie with his playboy ways, prompting her disapproval of their union.

Yet, after several encounters with Jimmie, her opinion softened, especially learning of his support for Marco during Bryant Group's downfall. This shifted her perspective positively.

Basking in the aftermath of her playful banter with Jennie, Loraine felt a surge of warmth at the touch of her bracelet. She rose, intent on visiting Marco's room.

His room was right next to hers. The door stood unlocked. All of a sudden, Loraine had a playful idea. She gently rotated the doorknob and slipped inside without a sound.

Inside, Marco's attention was fully absorbed by the bracelet, his back to Loraine, oblivious to her stealthy entrance.

Unable to contain herself, Loraine chuckled, "It seems that bracelet has captured your heart!"

Startled, Marco spun around, his face breaking into a sincere, warm smile. He nodded, a gesture of deep appreciation. "This is made by you. It deserves to be treasured."

Then, with a self-deprecating sigh, he lamented, "I only wish I could've crafted something as perfect for you."

Sensing his vulnerability, Loraine reassured him swiftly, "Don't be silly. I love it!"

Drawing nearer, she caught Marco's gaze lifting to hers, their eyes meeting. It was a moment of silent communication, punctuated by his deep eyes, prominent nose, and slightly parted lips in surprise.

Loraine's pulse raced. She was utterly enchanted by him.

The realization hit her that they were alone in the house that day.

Ever since returning from the rural areas, despite sharing the same roof, they had refrained from any intimate contact, cautious not to be alone together for too long to avoid Aldo's teasing.

But now, there were no such concerns.

A dryness in her throat, Loraine glanced around for a

conversation starter.

"The bracelet you crafted... it's quite unique. I treasure it," she commented.

Marco's gaze deepened, his thoughts mirroring Loraine's.

The recent days had tested his restraint more than hers. Though she was always close, their touches were fleeting, limited to mere kisses and embraces.

Marco surveyed the closed door with a discerning gaze.

He wrapped his arm tenderly around Loraine's waist and, with an unwavering expression, expressed his gratitude, "I owe you thanks for the lessons."

Their gazes locked, and a wave of determination filled the air. Suddenly, Loraine grasped the essence of "lust".

Nibbling on her lip, she murmured teasingly, "And your plan for thanking me? My lessons don't come cheap. A single bracelet hardly covers the cost."

At her teasing remark, a raw yearning flickered in Marco's eyes. Without warning, he drew her closer, his whisper intimate. "What do you want, dear teacher?"

The term "teacher" was laden with the same peculiar charge she'd experienced in the shop, sending a thrilling shiver through her.

Alone with him, bashfulness overcame Loraine, yet she managed a solemn tone. "Is that another lesson you seek from me?"

Memories of seeking his advice in his apartment surfaced, where he had insisted on a "tuition" for his advice.

Now that the tables were turned, she saw her chance for playful retribution.

His laughter was a soft prelude to the sound of unfastening buttons as he offered in a sexy tone, "Perhaps I could pay the tuition with myself?"

Loraine's eyes went round, her hand instinctively reaching out to halt him, but her heart secretly concurred.

Confusion clouded her thoughts. Wasn't she the one at a disadvantage here?



Chapter 833 Doris's Intention

When they were done, Loraine lay on the bed, exhausted and worn out. Her breathing was heavy, and she was flushed all over.

The word "teacher" suddenly felt like a dirty one. Marco had called her teacher when they were flirting. Thankfully, he stopped after a while.

Her heart skipped a beat as she stared at Marco beside her. She let out a small snort, turned the other way, and fell asleep. They were alone in the house, so she decided to just sleep there instead of returning to her room.

Meanwhile, Marco's heart beat faster and faster. He sighed and shook his head to shake off the thoughts. Even if Aldo wasn't watching, he would still wait for marriage before touching her. Flirting with her equaled suffering for him.

It was very clear that Loraine was tired. She dozed off as soon as her head hit the pillow. She looked so cute, sleeping with her mouth open.

Marco stared at her lovingly, his smile deepening with every passing second. After a while, he went to get a hot towel from the bathroom and wiped her face gently. He pinched her nose playfully but quickly let go so that she wouldn't wake up.

He went to take a shower after that. Once done, he lay beside Loraine and cuddled her tightly. The only thing on his mind was how he wanted to marry her as quickly as possible.

In the morning, Marco woke up to find Loraine sleeping



peacefully in his arms. His heart warmed at the sight. He gently got out of bed and tucked her in. He left the room as quietly as he could to go make breakfast for her.

The servants smiled as they saw him approaching, already used to his morning routine for Loraine. "You're head over heels for Miss Torres, aren't you, Mr. Bryant?"

A soft smile played on his lips. Marco was already familiar with most of the servants of the Torres household.

His cooking skills had improved greatly. He was about to flip the egg over to its other side when one of the servants called his attention, "Your phone, Mr. Bryant."

After wiping his hands, Marco retrieved the phone and noticed Doris's name flashing on the screen. What did she want now? With a small frown, he picked it up.

"Marco, where in the world are you?" Doris's slightly reproachful voice came over the phone.

His silence only made Doris more upset.

"You shouldn't expose your relationship with Loraine this much. The transfer of the Solar Company back to this country hasn't been confirmed yet!"

"I think you should mind your own business, Doris. And it's your idea to acquire the Bryant Group, isn't it?" Marco huffed.

"I did what I did for the company's sake..." Doris was hesitant as she spoke. "Acquiring the Bryant Group means you'd be able to take over its previous collaboration projects. This way, the Solar Company would be able to gain a firm hold in the country quickly!"

Her words meant nothing to Marco. He kept his cold expression



and said, "Okay then... I have something better for you to do."

"And what could that be?"

"Go to Zodiac. Meet Carl. You grew up over there, didn't you? Wouldn't you like to visit home again? And for the transfer, we're going to need Zodiac's help."

Doris didn't know what to say. It was obvious that Marco was trying to rid himself of her and stop her from making decisions for him. However, he did have a good point, so she remained silent. She knew better than to push him any further.

She paused for a moment to regain her composure, and then replied, "All right then, I'll head to Zodiac."

Marco hung up with a small frown on his face. Doris wouldn't call him just to tell him that for no reason. And what was she even talking about? He hadn't done anything to "expose" his relationship with Loraine. Suddenly, a notification popped up on his phone.

"Latest news! Loraine seems to have Marco in an interesting relationship!"



Chapter 834 Exposed Photo

With a furrowed brow, Marco tapped on the link and quickly understood the situation.

The owner of a craft store had shared an image on Twitter, one that captured him and Loraine, their fingers intertwined. They had on bracelets crafted by their own hands.

The snapshot told Marco that the shopkeeper bore no ill will; she likely aimed to drum up more publicity by tagging him and Loraine, not anticipating the stir it would cause.

Initially, it was just bystanders and their admirers who chimed in. Most shared warm, affable words. Even those indifferent to the pair would remark, "They seem like they're meant for each other!"

Their supporters reveled in the display of affection, exclaiming, "Our support for you is unwavering! May your love endure! Such sweetness!"

One observant fan noticed the bracelets, chuckling. "The bracelet with the white rabbit is so adorably ugly. Yet, it pairs so well with the wolf!"

But as the crowd swelled, the tone shifted, and jibes began to surface.

There were those who favored Loraine yet loathed her association with any man, Marco in particular, post his tenure as the head of Bryant Group. They criticized sharply, "Marco, you're disgraceful. Have you taken a good look at yourself in the mirror? Do you truly consider yourself worthy of Loraine?"

A chorus of disparagement followed, "The former CEO now a kept man?"

"Unbelievable, some people's true nature. Marco is just a coward, a nobody. Ever since his ousting from the Bryant family, he's shown his true self!"

Some even suggested that Loraine's kindness towards Marco eclipsed her loyalty to her own family.

"Is Loraine that desperate for male company? Such a cheap woman. Why not just concentrate on wealth and her profession? I had respect for her for the Universe Group's mega ventures, but now, she's lost my esteem."

"The whispers that Loraine had been raised in the countryside seemed to hold truth. Despite her abilities, her choice in men was questionable. Marco's nothing but a deadbeat!"

Some defended Loraine, "What business is it of yours? She's free to fancy whomever she pleases. Your approval isn't required, nor have you invested a penny in her life. Your disappointment is irrelevant."

Another chimed in, defending Marco's past achievements, "He may not be a president now, but he was once a billionaire. People would do well to mind their own affairs."

The more people chattered, the more attention the subject garnered, their remarks growing ever more vitriolic. Eventually, the gossip twisted to suggest Loraine was supporting Marco financially.

Marco, who could tolerate slander against himself, drew the line at insults hurled at Loraine.

Discovering the uproar online, he understood why Doris had



called earlier. She had seen the news and wanted his take on it.

Intent on shielding Loraine from the negativity, he contemplated instructing his team to quash the trending topic. Just as he was about to issue the command, Loraine's sleepy voice floated down from the staircase. "Marco!"

Looking up, Marco saw her in her pajamas, half-awake, and teetering on the stairs.

Her drowsy actions made it clear to him she was still enveloped in sleep's embrace. Rushing to her aid, he scooped her into his arms and gently set her down, concern lacing his voice. "Why not rest a bit longer?"

With a yawn, Loraine wrapped her arms around his neck, her voice soft and playful. "I missed my boyfriend the moment I wake up, so I came searching for you."

Amused, Marco guided her hand to his cheek, affirming his presence. "See, I'm right here."

Loraine's laugh was muffled as she nestled into his embrace, relishing the moment.

She was determined to make the most of the time alone with him, especially while her family was away.

It was her home, after all.

Meanwhile, the servants on the lower floor averted their gazes, feigning obliviousness. Beal approached with a cough, diverting his eyes. He feigned ignorance, murmuring, "I've seen nothing. Despite Mr. Torres's instructions to monitor these two, age has rendered my vision far too blurry."

Marco, with a fond pinch to Loraine's cheek, grinned and teased, "Silly girl."