

## Chapter 88 Fiancee

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A couple of days later, Loraine followed up on her appointment with Grady.

His family's villa was splendidly decorated and located in a suburb with stunning views.

Having already received the order from Grady, the butler came out and welcomed Loraine.

"Miss Torres, please follow me."

The butler led Loraine through the huge front garden and into the villa.

Much to Loraine's surprise, the Cruz family was already hosting visitors.

Laura and Marina were chatting happily with Florence Cruz, Grady's mother, in the living room.

"Mrs. Cruz, long time no see. I chose this gift for you especially. Let me open it for you, and you can see whether or not you like it."

Smiling, Laura reached into a gift box and pulled out a large and exquisite antique clock.

A flash of astonishment crossed Florence's face.

"You are so kind. I like your gift very much. Thank you."

Encouraged, Laura pulled Marina towards Florence.

"Marina, come and meet Mrs. Cruz."

Marina looked like a lily in her white dress suit—pure, sweet, and delicate.

"Nice to meet you, Mrs. Cruz," she said politely.

Florence gave Marina a once-over and nodded, satisfied.

"Marina, you've grown up. You're so beautiful and polite. My son just went upstairs; he'll be down soon. It's been a long time since you've seen one another. Have a good chat. He will like you."

Marina blushed shyly.

Laura smiled, barely able to contain her joy.

She had come here today to make a match between Grady and Marina.

Florence seemed to approve of Marina, so the matter of marriage was all but confirmed.

At that moment, the butler brought Loraine inside. Florence, Laura and Marina turned their heads simultaneously to see her.



"Madam, this is..."

Marina interrupted the butler immediately.

"Lorraine Torres!" Marina shouted. "Why are you here?"

Lorraine couldn't help but mentally roll her eyes. How was it that she kept running into the Bryant family wherever she went? She must have had some bad luck lately.

"Marina, I don't want to argue with you today," Lorraine replied calmly. "I'm here as a guest; I was invited."

"The Cruz family is a noble clan. Why would they invite a pauper like you?" Marina turned to Florence. "Mrs. Cruz, this woman is a liar. I strongly advise you throw her out immediately!"

No sooner had Marina's spiteful words left her mouth than someone shouted from the second floor.

"No one can throw her out!"

Grady rushed downstairs and stood in front of Lorraine protectively. "Mom, Lorraine is not a liar. She is my guest and my friend!"

It was the first time Florence had seen her son act

nervously about a woman.

She smiled slightly. "It seems there's a misunderstanding. Since she's a friend of Grady, it's okay that she's here."

Marina watched with rising anger as her future fiance ignored her and stood next to Loraine, instead.

She thought Loraine was seducing another woman's man again. She was fuming mad.

Marina remained unconvinced. "How do you know Loraine? She's just some divorcee who seduces men. She doesn't deserve to be your friend. You'd better stay away from her!"

Frowning, Grady jumped to Loraine's defense. "Loraine is a talented and capable woman. Please don't slander her."

Marina's eyes widened in outrage. "You believe her over me? But I'm your fiancee!"

"What fiancee?" Grady snapped. "I don't know what you're talking about. Even if there was a marriage being negotiated, I wouldn't agree!"

Marina shrank back from his words, embarrassed. By this point, neither Florence nor Laura could sit



still.

In a cold voice, Laura asked, "Grady, what do you mean by that? Do you think Marina doesn't deserve you?"

"Mrs. Bryant, please calm down. Don't take him too seriously," Florence said apologetically and glared at her son. "Grady, where is your gentlemanly manner? Apologize immediately!"

Grady, unwilling to compromise, refused. "I didn't do anything wrong. Why should I apologize?"

It was the first time that Grady had disobeyed Florence, and the latter blamed Loraine for it.


Laura made the situation worse by saying, "Mrs. Cruz, there are things about Loraine you don't know. This woman is my former daughter-in-law, Loraine Torres. She divorced my son but won't let go of my family. She not only harasses my son but also recently sued me. She has a very bad character and cannot be trusted!"

Florence's impression of Loraine went downhill.

"Grady, this is unacceptable. Why would you bring this kind of person into our home?"

Loraine, who had been standing impassively

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 +120 Points at most

behind Grady, couldn't take it anymore.

"Mrs. Cruz, you can't just listen to a one-sided argument."

Florence was astonished.

Lorraine cast a disgusted glance towards Laura and Marina. "You two have the best understanding of the truth, don't you? Do you really want me to say it out loud?"



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Laura and Marina froze.

Florence sensed that something was wrong.

Lorraine explained, "Mrs. Cruz, I'm indeed Marco's ex-wife. However, there's nothing between us now except business. I don't want to have anything to do with him now. Marina stole the confidential documents of Bryant Group, but Laura spread the slanderous rumor that I was the culprit. I sued her for defamation because it served her right."

Now that Florence heard Lorraine's side of the story, her expression changed. She looked at Laura and Marina with a hint of disappointment.

"What do you have to say about this? Is what she said true?"

Laura's heart skipped a beat. She denied it in a hurry. "Of course not!"

Marina's forehead broke out in cold sweat. She uttered guiltily, "Mrs. Cruz, that's not true. Don't believe her!"

Lorraine let out an angry laugh.

Indeed, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Both mother and daughter were stupid.

There was indisputable evidence online, but they were still trying to lie their way out of the situation.

"I have no reason to lie to you, Mrs. Cruz. If you don't believe me, you can surf the internet. You will see Mrs. Bryant's statement of apology on the official website of Bryant Group."

Florence wasn't a fan of getting news on the internet. But now that Lorraine made this statement, she believed her.

Laura was unsettled that everything had come to light, so she tried to explain.

"It's just a misunderstanding! Mrs. Cruz, let me explain..."

Lorraine was pissed, so she didn't want to give Laura the chance to get away with this. She pointed at the antique clock on the table and asked, "Did you just say it was a misunderstanding? Was your fake gift also a misunderstanding?"

Everyone was stunned when they heard this.

Marina's face flushed. She pointed at Lorraine and



shouted, "Stop talking nonsense. What do you know about antiques? This clock is worth five million dollars! How dare you say it's fake?"

"For your information, I have some knowledge about antiques." Loraine flipped her hair back and flashed a proud smile. "It seems this bronze clock is modeled according to the French clocks made during the reign of King Louis XVI."

The jaws of Laura and Marina dropped suddenly. They were shocked that Loraine recognized the clock at a glance.

Folding her arms, Loraine continued, "It's fake but it looks very similar to the real one. The rust on its surface makes it look so old. Such rust takes at least seven hundred years to form. This was long before Louis XVI ascended the throne. It means the clock can only be a fake!"

Marina had no knowledge of antiques. Although she wanted to rebut Loraine's claim, she couldn't because confusion set in.

"Bah! You must have made that up. How can you prove your silly claim?"

"Prove it?" Loraine raised her eyebrows. "Fine, you

should ask someone to wipe the clock with saline water. Naturally formed rust on the surface can't be wiped away. But the one on this clock will wipe away easily."

Marina was still stubborn. She was annoyed that Loraine was getting more confident.

"No way! Water will damage the clock. I suspect that's what you want to do, you sly woman!"

It skipped Marina's mind that the Cruz family were top players in the antique collection industry. Florence could tell whether this method would damage the clock or not.

"Get me some saline water right away," Florence ordered the butler.

Shortly after, the butler returned with a bowl of saline water. He dipped a silk scarf in it and carefully wiped the surface of the bronze clock.

Just as Loraine had predicted, rust disappeared with just one wipe.

It turned out that the clock was fake.

Florence's face turned red with fury when she saw the glaring evidence.

"What do you have to say now, Mrs. Bryant? You





are from a reputable family. Don't you think it's shameful for you to bring me a fake item under the guise that it's real? Have you no shame?"

Laura was just as shocked as Florence.

She stammered, "I...I honestly didn't know that the clock was fake. I gave Marina five million to buy it. It appears the seller swindled us."


At this time, Loraine became more suspicious about the whole thing.

She squinted at Marina and uttered, "Were you really deceived, Marina? Or did you pocket a chunk of the money and bought a substandard item instead? After all, you are not to be trusted. You stole the documents and sold them for money, so there's a possibility you pocketed your mother's money!"

"Shut the fuck up, Loraine! Don't try to slander me. The two scenarios aren't the same at all. I was cheated by the seller. I paid five million for the clock at a registered antique shop!" Marina still tried to get away with it.

Grady piped up, "Marina, there's still a way out of this. Since you were cheated, just tell us the name

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 +120 Points at most

of the antique shop. I can help you retrieve the money and even sue them. The Cruz family has some strong connections in this industry."

"Well, I bought it at..." Marina stammered, unable to name the place.

Her reluctance made the truth even more obvious.

It turned out Marina had bought a cheap fake and pocketed the rest of the money. She was such a fraudulent liar!