

Chapter 958 A Fake Message

As they drove in silence, the solemn atmosphere in the car unsettled the driver.

There was an emergency kit in the car, but it had few medical supplies. Loraine's body was covered in numerous minor wounds, and Cayson felt unsure about how to treat them. Looking up and seeing her downcast expression, he couldn't help but ask with concern, "Does it hurt? How about we go to the hospital, and afterwards, I'll treat you to a nice meal?"

Loraine had been silent since they got in the car, staring blankly out the window. The scattered wounds made her seem vulnerable, and Cayson was deeply troubled by her state.

He guessed her mood was down due to her wounds, so he tried to comfort her as he had when they were children, hoping to bridge any distance or awkwardness between them.

However, Loraine's sadness stemmed from her inability to reach Marco. Without turning to face him, she responded in a subdued voice, "Cayson, why are you here?"

Cayson's expression grew serious as he answered with a tentative smile, "My father's health isn't great, so he sent me to Zodiac. I was on a business trip for headquarters and managed to coordinate my schedule to come here..." He added, slightly embarrassed, "I wanted to surprise you, but then I saw you on my way."

Loraine considered for a moment. The route did link the airport with the downtown area. She nodded in acknowledgment.

Cayson, his face shadowed by concern, inquired, "If I remember





correctly, Marco should be in Zodiac too. He's a Cruz family member now. Why isn't he with you?"

Loraine just pressed her lips together and continued to gaze out the window, silent.

A flicker of joy appeared on Cayson's face. He continued cautiously, "Did he just ignore you after arriving at Zodiac?"

Loraine answered, "No, I haven't been able to reach him lately."

She looked down, disheartened. Her concerns for Marco, coupled with the fear lingering from a recent scare, made it hard for her to unwind.

However, Cayson scowled, expressing his dissatisfaction. "He's influential, how can you not know his whereabouts? Lorrie, if he hasn't sent any messages, he probably doesn't care!"

Noticing that Loraine remained silent, head bowed, Cayson's tone grew sterner. "If he's become indifferent because he's now with the Cruz family, then I was completely mistaken about him. Lorrie, he's not the right one for you..."

But Loraine wasn't listening. She was lost in thought.

Considering Marco's capabilities, if he hadn't sent any messages, the situation had to be dire. Maybe he was unable to communicate with the outside world, hence no messages.

She needed to find a way to help him.

As this thought crossed her mind, her mobile phone's screen suddenly lit up. A message from an unknown number flashed briefly. "Come to Solar Company quickly!"

Loraine was puzzled, but her eyes sparkled with hope. The message had to be about Marco.



It seemed Marco was in trouble. Maybe he couldn't reach her himself, so he had someone from Solar Company send the message on his behalf.

Clutching her phone and with a determined look, Loraine quickly instructed the driver, "Turn around and head to the Solar Company!"

Noticing her sudden change in demeanor, Cayson grew anxious. He furrowed his brows and inquired, "What's the matter? Why are you rushing to the Solar Company?"

Since few were aware of Marco's connection with the Solar Company, Cayson hadn't made the connection.

With a slight smile, Loraine responded vaguely, "There's a partnership between our branch and Solar Company's Zodiac branch. I need to get in touch with them."

Loraine didn't have the energy to focus on today's cooperation. More than anything, she just wanted to see Marco.

After a brief silence, Cayson said softly, "It isn't right for you to be around them right now. Go to the hospital and rest for the night. You can visit tomorrow."

Loraine was ready to argue, but catching sight of her disheveled appearance in the reflection, she frowned.

She knew that seeing her like this would only make Marco worry.

She didn't want her condition to spoil the joy of their reunion.

So, she reluctantly agreed and responded to the unknown number, "It's late, but I'll be there tomorrow morning!"

At the Solar Company's branch, Doris was handing her phone back to the assistant when she noticed a message from

Loraine.

She smirked slightly and discreetly deleted the message. Tossing the phone to the assistant, she said with a casual smile, "Pass this back to Carl. I know Loraine. I've already told her, and she'll be here tomorrow afternoon."



Chapter 959 By Accident

In the Solar Company building, Marco, who had just regained some energy, sat up from the couch and coughed, covering his mouth with his hand.

Escaping from the Cruz family's house had taken much effort the day before. He chose the Solar Company as his safe haven because its connection to him was unknown.

"Carl! How is the phone?" Marco called out after a bout of coughing.

Fearful that Melvin might have tampered with his previous phone, Marco had left it behind with the Cruz family and hadn't replaced it yet.

Hearing Marco's voice, Carl promptly entered the room and handed over a new phone with a smile. "Mr. Bryant, I've let Miss Torres know. She'll be here this afternoon."

Marco looked at him and responded coldly, "Who gave you permission to do that?"

Carl, having served him longest, knew him well and wasn't deterred by Marco's cold demeanor. With a chuckle, he replied, "You seemed exhausted yesterday. I thought Miss Torres might be concerned about you, so I went ahead and made the arrangement."

His prediction was correct; Marco didn't reprimand him but instead laughed off the scolding.

The news of seeing Loraine later warmed Marco's heart.

For the past two days, he had been completely cut off from everyone. He wondered if Loraine was worried about him.

Although Carl had acted independently, it turned out to be exactly what Marco wanted. Had he been feeling better, he would have already visited Loraine himself.

Now that she was coming to the Solar Company, it was time to share everything with her.

Worried, Marco frowned, rubbed his temples, and said in a hoarse voice, "Go and call the project manager over."

He decided it was best to confess slowly. So, he planned to manage his work in the morning and reveal the truth to Loraine in the afternoon. He didn't want her to be overwhelmed and upset with him.

With this in mind, Marco smiled and walked inside.

The CEO's office included a lounge, designed specifically for him. The wardrobe was filled with all sorts of high-end suits.

Since he was meeting Loraine as the president of Solar Company, a role new to her, he felt a bit nervous. He chose a subtly elegant new suit and put it on. Once dressed, he looked sharp and refreshed, the previous fatigue gone.

Marco smiled. It had been a tough escape from the Cruz family; otherwise, he wouldn't have been so exhausted that he fell asleep without even calling Loraine.

Despite the exhaustion, he wanted to look his best for Loraine, hoping to alleviate any of her concerns.

Yet, when he met with the project manager, he was unaware that Loraine had already arrived.

Loraine wasn't surprised to learn that Marco was at Solar

Company. She knew Marco had a strong connection with the company, which had even loaned her a surgical robot twice on his behalf.

If Marco had been missing due to issues with the Cruz family, it made sense that he would turn to the Solar Company for help.

As she walked into the Solar Company building, Loraine discreetly pulled down her sleeves to cover the injuries on her arms.

Though the wounds were painful, she didn't want Marco to see them and worry, knowing he must have gone through a lot to escape.

At that moment, upstairs, someone watched her with keen interest and then smiled.

Her assistant, standing by her side, said respectfully, "Miss Hoffman, should we let Mr. Bryant know?"

Doris shook her head and in a lazy tone, she said, "Just have the receptionist take good care of her. I'll let Mr. Bryant know myself."

Her assistant nodded and quietly conversed with the receptionist at the front desk for a moment. After the exchange, the receptionist turned to Loraine with a warm greeting. "Hello, are you here to discuss a partnership?"

Loraine offered a slight nod and a gentle smile. "I'm representing the Universe Group today."

While she expressed her words, she scanned the area for Marco, but he was nowhere to be seen. She felt a tinge of disappointment.

Shouldn't Marco have been there to greet her? Why wasn't he here?

The well-instructed receptionist bowed slightly and with a smile, directed her, "Please follow me to the meeting room. Someone will join you shortly."

Loraine nodded, thinking that Solar Company's professionalism was fitting for an international corporation.

She followed the receptionist to the meeting room, where she was offered a cup of tea and asked to wait for a little while. The receptionist then left the room.

Alone in the meeting room, Loraine sipped her tea, feeling somewhat out of place.

Feeling uneasy by herself, she decided to check her phone to send a message to the number that had texted her the previous day, inquiring about what was happening.

Just then, she heard a familiar voice at the door.

It was Marco! As she stood up, she paused, overhearing the conversation outside.



Chapter 960 You Have Never Been Truthful With Me

Outside the meeting room, Marco was about to go in to get ready when Doris stopped him with a smile. "There you are, Marco."

Doris walked up and leaned against the doorframe, her posture reminiscent of a graceful serpent.

Marco appeared unfazed and inquired, "What do you need?"

Doris, familiar with his aloof demeanor, brushed it off and whispered, "I've let the project manager know. Is there anyone else who should be informed?"

Marco replied casually, "You handle it. I don't need to inform anyone else."

The most important person to him was already on her way later this afternoon.

Still smiling, Doris said, "By the way, after your escape from the Cruz family, do you plan to keep your role as president of the Solar Company a secret?"

Marco frowned, not appreciating the intrusion into his private matters, and responded sharply, "I have my plans. Don't worry about them."

Doris looked down softly. "I'm just looking out for you as a support. Marco, you've concealed your identity for so long, and people treat you like a nobody. I can't stand it! But you won't let others know who you really are. I..."

Chapter 960 You Have Never Been Truthful With. 🎁 +120 Points at most

Marco's displeasure grew. "Just focus on your duties. It's not your concern."

He brushed past Doris and pushed the door open.

Then he froze.

Because standing before him was a shocked Loraine.

The glass in her hand dropped, shattering on the floor. Water spread at her feet, mirroring her stunned expression.

Loraine's face turned pale, unable to believe the conversation she had just overheard.

If Marco hadn't confessed himself, she would never have guessed that he was the CEO of Solar Company!

Loraine laughed at herself as she recalled the immense worries of recent days and the absurd things she had done after Marco left the Bryant family.

She had indeed acted like the person Doris described, foolishly treating Marco as a destitute man. Taking him to eat cheap street food and visiting food markets had seemed so considerate at the time...

Perhaps to the president of Solar Company, her actions were laughable.

She had seen Marco as a humble man and had been so careful to protect his pride. Was he secretly amused by her naive plans?

Looking at him, Loraine gave a bitter smile with a tone of self-mockery and asked, "What should I call you? Mr. Bryant?"

This name now sounded cold and ironic.

Marco's expression changed. Wasn't Loraine supposed to arrive

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later in the afternoon?

He had planned to reveal his identity to Loraine when they met later, but he wouldn't let her find out like this!

Before he could understand why Loraine was here and had overheard their conversation, he was at a loss and eager to explain, "Loraine, I was planning to tell you the truth after we met. I..."

He instinctively reached for her hand but gripped it too tightly, causing her to wince in pain and pull away, her eyes filling with tears.

Just yesterday, she had nearly died in a car explosion. At her most vulnerable moment, he hadn't been there.

As she struggled with his absence, she had tried to convince herself that he couldn't be with her due to circumstances beyond his control. But seeing Marco so well-dressed today, she felt deeply wronged.

Marco... Why had he deceived her?

Besides concealing his identity, he also failed to keep his promise to always protect her.

Loraine understood that she might be overreacting, but the hurt inside her was overwhelming.

Marco had deceived her once more, betraying her trust yet again.

She had believed that since he had nothing, he needed to venture to Zodiac and the Cruz family to secure their future.

Yet, Marco had always had an ace up his sleeve.

She couldn't help but wonder whether Marco's intentions in

Chapter 960 You Have Never Been Truthful With. 🎁 +120 Points at most Zodiac were truly for their future or if it was for greater wealth and interests.

Seeing Doris standing next to Marco, smiling broadly, made Loraine's heart drop.

She realized then that he was never lacking in wealth or the company of beautiful women. Doris's hostility towards her had been about Marco all along.

So, when she nearly lost her life in the car accident, Marco, with the thoughtful and attentive Doris by his side, didn't really need her worry.

With tears streaming down her face, Loraine laughed bitterly at herself.

"So you are still lying to me. It turns out you have never been truthful with me."

Marco felt a stab of pain in his heart, but he was acutely aware that she had been hurt just moments ago. He was eager to say something, but then he saw Loraine close her eyes and said wearily, "Let's break up."



Chapter 961 Let's Break Up

Marco's face turned pale and his breathing quickened at the mention of a break up. He protested, "I don't agree!"

His eyes, filled with desperation, locked onto Loraine's. "Loraine, you promised we'd never break up, no matter what!"

At that moment, Loraine had lost her patience, her calm eyes now tinged with sorrow. She retorted with a sneer, "But I also mentioned honesty was a condition! I've given you several chances, yet you continue to keep secrets from me. If we can't be honest with each other, how can we possibly continue?"

Loraine felt exhausted as she spoke. The stress and fatigue from the previous day, when she had clung to the hope of seeing Marco, had taken their toll.

Now, with her hopes shattered, she felt the deepest despair.

She clenched her lips, preferring silence, but her unsettled feelings made her feet restless.

Finally, she raised her eyes to meet Marco's, her voice tinged with sadness. "I've always said I don't care about money or power. I care about you. But... you still keep things from me because you doubt me, don't you?"

Marco had always been reserved, and Loraine had tried everything to make him feel secure and to change him.

Now, it seemed changing his mind was out of the question.

Marco's face grew pale. Lowering his gaze, he said softly, "Loraine, believe me. I've been wanting to tell you the truth for



a long time, but I knew you hated the president of Solar Company, so I kept quiet to avoid your disdain..."

Despite the presence of his subordinate, he walked over to Loraine, took her hand gently, and said with sincerity, "I thought you wouldn't be here until this afternoon. My plan was to finish my morning tasks and then tell you everything."

Loraine gave him a smile, which made Marco feel a flicker of happiness, and he smiled back.

However, Loraine firmly withdrew her hand, her smile turning cold. "So, you're upset I came early?" she asked.

Marco's face lost color again. He tried to speak, but Loraine closed her eyes in disappointment.

She had messaged him yesterday about arriving in the morning, yet Marco seemed to use this as an excuse to blame her. It dawned on her that she had been fooling herself for too long, not seeing him for the liar he was.

Loraine whispered bitterly, "Even if I did come early, couldn't you have at least sent a message? Is your work really more important than us, or do you just not care about me at all?"

She didn't wait for his response, because she knew the answer in her heart.

Perhaps Marco had countless justifiable reasons, but she was simply exhausted.

The car accident from the previous day and the Benton family's situation weighed heavily on her, deepening her sadness.

The thought that her uncle, who had cherished her since childhood, might now harm her for money terrified her. And she was equally scared that Cayson who had shown up yesterday could be just as dangerous.



She had followed Cayson's advice, visiting the hospital, getting her wounds treated, and resting. Yet, she had intentionally ignored the guilt in his eyes.

It seemed everyone had changed.

Zodiac was a place drenched in immense wealth and allure. So, did the people around her change because they came to Zodiac, or was that their true nature all along?

She had played the fool for too long, and now they all treated her like one.

With a laugh, Loraine wiped her eyes and looked at Marco. "You always think you know best, always trying to manage everything. Sure, you're a genius who can handle it all, but have you ever considered that I might not want my life orchestrated by you?"

Marco said anxiously, "No, I didn't. I..."

Loraine shook her head and cut him off. "I ought to be your lover, not just some employee you set up!"

Even if he acted meek and flirtatious in front of her, what did it matter? If something serious came up, he'd still keep secrets from her.

Loraine let out a deep breath and said indifferently, "Mr. Bryant, I think it's best if we give each other some space. You've got work, and other matters to attend to. Since we're both busy, let's not keep in touch."

With that, Loraine stepped on the shattered glass without a care, walked past Marco, and left without giving him a second glance.

As she walked by Doris, Doris smiled and gave a slight nod in greeting.



But Loraine didn't bother with her anymore and walked out of Solar Company, not looking back.



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Chapter 962 Cool Off

Seeing that Loraine had departed, Doris raised her eyebrows and smiled.

This was truly unexpected.

A delightful surprise.

Doris had orchestrated Loraine's early arrival to demonstrate her seamless cooperation with Marco at work. Her aim was to declare to Loraine that she was his indispensable ally, hoping to discourage Loraine from any rivalry.

Doris looked down on the idea of women competing over a man. In her view, she would only be valued by Marco if she proved her unique worth.

Originally, her plan had been quite effective. When Loraine entered the Bryant family in a secretive and modest manner, Doris never saw her as a real threat.

However, Loraine later rose to become the president of the Universe Group.

Though challenging, this development didn't deter Doris. She believed that the Universe Group, despite its name, was merely a local powerhouse and not as influential as Solar Company. She was confident in her ability to assist Marco better, and thus, she sought to drive Loraine away using this strategy.

She made sure Marco was unaware of this.

That's why she had worked hard to plan an "encounter" for them, but she never imagined it would lead to their breakup!

It appeared that their relationship was not as strong as she had assumed.

Pleased with herself, Doris was about to offer Marco some comfort when she saw him rushing outside with a troubled expression.

Doris tried to intercept him, "Marco, there's a meeting later!"

Without looking back, he responded firmly, "Postpone the meeting. Wait until I return!"

Meanwhile, Carl approached with meeting materials in his arms. Seeing his boss hurry off, he was puzzled. Then, in a sharp tone, Marco shouted, "Go to my office and wait there. I'll deal with you when I get back!"

Carl's expression changed, and the documents he held nearly slipped from his hands. With a hoarse voice, he said, "What?"

From a distance, he had seen Loraine's retreating figure and immediately surmised that Marco and Loraine had argued. He was puzzled about his own role in this conflict.

Spotting Doris, he approached her as if she might have the answers. He inquired, "Miss Hoffman, what happened?"

Doris managed a forced smile, her eyes betraying her anxiety. She turned and walked away without responding.

Carl furrowed his brow, feeling as though he was missing a crucial piece of information. Why was everyone acting so oddly?

What he didn't realize was that Doris was also unsettled by Marco's reaction.

Having lived abroad for some time and previously indulged by Marco, Doris had grown bold, almost forgetting the kind of person Marco really was.

Marco was unforgiving to those who crossed his lines.

Previously, she wasn't even permitted to question his secrecy about his identity. If he discovered that she had inadvertently caused his breakup with Loraine, would he forgive her?

Judging by Marco's stern demeanor and his sharp words to Carl, Doris was certain he would pursue the matter relentlessly. He would seek the truth!

And if he started to investigate, he would quickly discover that Doris had deleted the message without permission and had also altered it...

Marco, who always kept personal and professional matters separate, might not demote her, but he would certainly distance himself from her.

With shaky hands, Doris hastily pulled out her phone and summoned a subordinate.

This subordinate was the same one Carl had directed the previous day to purchase a new phone and notify Loraine.

Doris's plan was clear: she intended to make this subordinate the scapegoat. She was determined to avoid any repercussions herself.

On the other side, Marco quickly exited the building and upon seeing Loraine's car, he exhaled in relief and approached it slowly.

Inside the car, Loraine was gazing vacantly, her heart filled with indescribable sorrow.

At that moment, she felt too drained to drive. She rolled down the window to let in some fresh air and calm her nerves.

However, upon spotting Marco outside the window, she froze



momentarily. Then, with pain and sadness flitting across her eyes, she rolled up the window abruptly, her face cold but her eyes brimming with tears.

She was so overwhelmed by her fragility. She couldn't tolerate any falsehood. The car accident from the day before had not only left physical marks but also emotional scars. Seeing Marco brought back memories of her trust and honesty.

Why hadn't he listened to her? Why did he have to follow her? Couldn't he have allowed them both some space to cool off?

Outside the car, Marco too was tormented. He had hidden the truth initially because he feared exactly this reaction—the sight of Loraine's disgusted and cold look.

Yet, it was his lack of honesty that had utterly disillusioned Loraine. Now, she couldn't even bear to look at him.

Separated only by the car door, neither of them uttered a word. After more than a minute of heavy silence, the car engine finally started.

Marco looked up just in time to see Loraine's car drive past him, showing no signs of stopping.

