

## Chapter 987 Can You Tell Me Your Friend's Name

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The scarred man's face drained of color, a flicker of panic dancing in his eyes alongside a trace of embarrassment. His voice spiked with anger as he retorted, "Don't spout nonsense!"

As he spoke, all eyes on the construction site snapped towards him, many of them bloodshot and brimming with fury, a palpable tension settling over the scene.

The weight of the situation settled heavily; this was their coworker who had fallen and gotten hurt, after all. Amid life's trials, they found solidarity in facing common challenges. However, should anyone exploit their struggles for selfish gain, they'd be branded a traitor among them!

The scared man's panic surged, his eyes darting to the crowd as he yelled, "Listen up, everyone! Don't buy into her lies. She's wealthy and couldn't care less about us!"

With a tone dripping in righteous indignation, he accused. "She's trying to sow division among us to avoid paying what she owes! You all know me! I'm here to seek justice for my friend!"

Lorraine's lips curled into a faint smile as she found his impassioned speech amusing, deeming it a squandering of talent within the construction site's confines.

As he attempted to rationally incite the crowd, Lorraine grew increasingly convinced that he must be acting under someone else's instructions.

The scarred man wiped away tears, his expression one of deep sadness, before turning to face Loraine with fierce determination. "All we ask for is justice and an explanation from the Universe Group! We demand medical expenses and compensation for my friend!" His voice cracked with emotions, his accusation directed at Loraine. "You, with all your greed, can't even spare such a small amount!"

Loraine's sneer softened into a calm expression. "When did I ever imply that I wouldn't compensate? The injured worker has already been transported to the finest hospital in Zodiac for treatment, and the Universe Group will fully cover all medical expenses," Loraine explained calmly. "I specifically mentioned that we'll also compensate everyone for their lost wages today, as promised. Isn't that compensation?"

She glanced at the agitated workers, taking a moment before speaking gently. "Don't let others' provocations cloud your judgment. I trust that each of you understands the values Universe Group stands for." Her tone shifted, firm yet resolute. "I'll stand by every employee dedicated to Universe Group, but I won't tolerate anyone intentionally harming our company."

The scarred man's forehead glistened with sweat as he observed the crowd's wavering resolve. His anger surged, finger jabbing accusingly at Loraine. "You promised compensation for lost wages. How much exactly are we talking about? You're not planning to just give us a token amount and dismiss us, are you?"

Unwilling to be overshadowed, he raised his voice again to address the crowd. "Every single one of you has a family relying on you. You've poured your blood, sweat, and tears into this construction site, earning every penny!"

His accusatory finger aimed at Loraine's car as he exclaimed, "See that? This woman drives a luxury car, decked in designer brands. Where did she find all that money? It's like she's squeezing it right out of our bones! If we let her slip away today,

she'll grow bolder tomorrow and mark my words, one of us might be the next to fall!"

Lorraine's expression darkened as she realized she couldn't allow his incitement to escalate. She cut in with a stern voice, "Enough with the theatrics. What exactly do you think is a fair amount?"

The scarred man's smug smile widened, his eyes rolling with exaggerated confidence as he threw out an exorbitant figure, more than double the usual salary of the workers!

Lorraine wasn't about to be fooled. Her expression darkened, and before she could speak, the scarred man erupted, shouting, "Everyone, see what she's doing? She doesn't want to! I warned you all. She's nothing but a heartless boss. Do you really think she'd willingly part with her money?"

Before Lorraine could respond, he lashed out angrily, accusing her. "To her, our lives are worthless!"

Amidst the tense atmosphere, Lorraine's assistant maneuvered through the crowd and leaned in close to whisper urgently in Lorraine's ear, "Miss Torres, besides the scaffolding incident, there's another injured worker. He fell from a faulty safety ladder. Both have been hospitalized. The latest update indicates one with minor injuries and the other in critical condition."

Lorraine nodded to acknowledge the information, her mind swiftly processing the details. She redirected her focus to the assertive scarred man and inquired casually, "You mentioned seeking justice for your friend. Have you verified the extent of their injuries? Considering your demand for a substantial amount, I'll need to initiate legal procedures and evaluate the injuries accordingly."

The scarred man paused, his eyes betraying a mix of sorrow and concern. "Yes, he's seriously injured," he admitted with a

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heavy sigh. "He's still so young. I fear he may never lead a normal life again."

Lorraine's smile held a hint of skepticism as she posed a meaningful question. "Really? Can you tell me your friend's name? If we resolve this matter privately, I might need to offer him even greater compensation."

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## Chapter 988 The Accident On The Construction Site

Loraine narrowed her eyes, a strange expression crossing her face as she listened to her assistant and observed the scarred man's dramatic gestures.

Among the injured, the one with more severe wounds likely sustained them in the accident, as indicated by the medical staff. However, with only minor injuries, the other seemed prepared for the situation beforehand.

Loraine found it difficult to accept that someone could foresee such an event.

As the scarred man absorbed her words, a covetous glint flickered in his eyes. After all, his involvement was purely transactional; he remained unaware of the extent of his friend's injuries.

The person who had paid him explicitly instructed him to adhere to the orders and avoid causing any trouble. Still, the allure of unexpected money was too enticing for him to resist.

A sly grin played across his face at the thought of increasing his earnings. He raised his voice, feigning sorrow and outrage as he spoke. "My friend, Lukas Barrett, is a man of integrity, with elders and children relying on him. He would never..."

Loraine regarded him with a cold smile, her expression betraying no surprise. It seemed her suspicions were confirmed.

It seemed likely that Lukas had been bribed along with this scarred man, but at the last moment, Lukas had backed down,

unwilling to risk his life. Hence, he orchestrated a scenario where he sustained only minor injuries, unbeknownst to his accomplice.

The scarred man felt a shiver run down his spine as he caught Loraine's piercing gaze, a sense of unease settling in his stomach. Meanwhile, Loraine's eyes scanned the workers on the construction site, her voice resonating as she addressed them. "Everyone, the Universe Group stands firm in supporting the injured. We will ensure their compensation and cover their medical expenses per company policies. Our employees will always be treated with respect and fairness."

Her tone turned colder as she continued, "However, the Universe Group will not tolerate extortion. Lost wages will be reimbursed based on your standard salary. But for those, like this man, who demand more than is fair, I will defend the interests of Universe Group using the full force of the law."

As Loraine concluded her statement, murmurs rippled through the crowd.

As the scarred man pondered his next move, observing Loraine engrossed in her phone, he felt a twinge of anxiety.

Suddenly, Loraine's gaze locked onto him, her lips curling into a smile. "By the way," she began, "I have a question for you. Everyone here starts their day early, yet your uniform is remarkably pristine."

In unison, the workers redirected their attention to the scarred man, noting the stark contrast between his immaculate attire and their mud-stained uniforms.

The man's expression shifted, though he attempted to maintain composure. "I'm new here," he hastily explained. "I only came because Lucas works here..."

Loraine sneered, refraining from further argument as she

simply retrieved her phone and played a video.

A nearby worker squinted at the video and exclaimed, "Isn't that Lukas? You two snuck into the construction site in the middle of the night. What were you up to?"

The scarred man's heart skipped a beat. He felt a surge of unease as he realized that Loraine possessed surveillance footage. He and Lukas had carefully chosen a corner they believed to be devoid of functional cameras...

However, he had no time to dwell on how Loraine acquired the footage. Once swayed by his instigation, the crowd now regarded him with suspicion.

In a sudden epiphany, the scarred man noticed something odd; the absence of sound in Loraine's video!

Forcing himself to remain composed, he retorted fearlessly, "I already mentioned I was here to meet Lukas for work. Is there a law against meeting at midnight?"

Suddenly, a youthful voice emanated from Loraine's phone. "Mommy, Qbot also captured the audio. Should I play the video again?"

The scarred man was so startled that he took several steps back as if confronted by a ghost. His voice trembled as he questioned, "What in the world is that?"

Qbot retorted, "I'm Mommy's little helper! Humph! You, bad guy, thinking you could get away with mischief by choosing a spot where the surveillance camera was malfunctioning? Qbot sees everything!"

Indeed, while the camera in that particular corner might have been nonfunctional, Qbot's omnipresence across the internet allowed it to take control of any camera once connected to the web.

Loraine smiled with a hint of pride. "Impressive, Qbot. Let's play the full video again."

At that moment, everyone's phones chimed simultaneously, and a surveillance video, complete with an audio recording, was received.

The scarred man's arrogant voice reverberated clearly through the speakers. "Once we pull this off, I'll blackmail the president of Universe Group for a hefty sum. Since you'll be injured, you'll get seventy percent of the payout!"

With the damning revelation echoing in their minds, bystanders finally grasped the orchestrated nature of the so-called accident, courtesy of the scarred man and Lukas.

Simultaneously, Loraine's decisive command pierced the air. "Call the police immediately to apprehend this man!"

The scarred man's complexion drained of color as he realized his fate was sealed. With a fierce glare, he lowered his head, a sense of desperation evident in his demeanor. Suddenly, his gaze shot up to meet Loraine's, his hand darting to his waist. A glint of cold steel flashed as he lunged toward her!



## Chapter 989 Take The Risk

No one had anticipated the man's sudden rush toward Loraine, let alone his wielding of a sharp weapon.

Loraine stood momentarily stunned, helpless, as the gleaming blade bore down on her. For a heart-stopping moment, she was a statue, her body unable to respond.

The sudden screams shattered the silence, jolting her bodyguards into action. They lunged forward, desperate to shield her, but the scarred man was alarmingly close, his movements fueled by a wild, reckless energy. How could the bodyguards hope to intercept him in time?

Yet, Loraine was not one to succumb to fear. With swift determination, she sidestepped, ensuring the blade's strike, if inevitable, would be less dire.

Time stretched thin, each moment pregnant with uncertainty. Loraine knew she'd done all she could. Now, she braced herself for whatever came next.

She shut her eyes.

The anticipated agony never arrived. Eyes snapping open, Loraine beheld the man crumpling before her, his wails filling the air as he clutched his injured leg. The bodyguards swiftly closed in, wresting him into submission.

At that moment, a figure dashed over, concern etched on their face. "Miss Torres, are you alright?"

Loraine's gaze fell upon Carl, a familiar face she hadn't seen in ages. Behind him stood a unit of police officers, one of whom

had just discharged the decisive shot.

Relief washed over her as she steadied herself, her limbs still trembling from the adrenaline surge. Her voice rasped as she replied, "I'm fine. Thank you for intervening."

Carl's presence sparked a realization within her. The surveillance footage she'd received moments ago had also come through Marco via Qbot.

Recognizing Marco's unwavering dedication to supporting her from the shadows stirred a tumult of emotions within her.

As the man was escorted away by the authorities, the atmosphere shifted. The sight of real weapons had left the workers petrified, dissuading any further disruption.

Recognizing the scarred man as the instigator of the chaos, Loraine harbored no ill will toward the others caught in the turmoil. After assuring their safety, she directed them to their quarters for much-needed respite.

With order gradually restored to the construction site, she turned her attention to Carl, who remained by her side, a steadfast presence amidst the chaos. She pressed her lips together, her gaze betraying a tangle of conflicting emotions. "Was it Marco who sent you?"

The two shared a history, and meeting in Zodiac, a foreign land to both, infused their encounter with a comforting sense of familiarity.

Upon hearing her words, Carl nodded in immediate acknowledgment. Then, with a newfound resolve, he spoke up with conviction. "Miss Torres," he began earnestly, "please pardon my intrusion, but I feel compelled to clarify something on Mr. Bryant's behalf."

Recalling the tumultuous day when he'd retrieved Marco from

the clutches of the Cruz family, Carl recounted how exhaustion had overcome Marco, leading to his collapse. "I reached out to you immediately," he continued, "yet my team's incompetence resulted in a miscommunication, leading to..."

Observing Loraine's expression, Carl's countenance fell, his features clouded with regret. "Mr. Bryant understands your desire for distance, but his concern for your safety compelled him to entrust me with your protection in secret. Today's events were unforeseen, and I apologize for any inconvenience my presence may have caused."

Loraine's response hovered on her lips, but Carl's sincerity left her momentarily speechless.

Moreover, she couldn't overlook his pivotal role in her rescue. Gratitude swelled within her, and after a beat of contemplative silence, she spoke softly. "Let bygones be bygones. There's no need to dwell. But I am grateful for your actions today."

Observing Loraine's softened demeanor, Carl couldn't contain his joy, a smile lighting up his features. Clearing his throat, he assumed a more serious tone. "If you wish to extend your gratitude, perhaps a face-to-face meeting with Mr. Bryant would be most appropriate."

Loraine was momentarily taken aback by his suggestion, and her silence spoke volumes.

Recognizing the limit of his influence, Carl maintained his cheerful demeanor. "Well then, I'll take my leave. Remember, the Solar Company is at your service."

Loraine nodded absentmindedly, her thoughts still drifting elsewhere.

In truth, her anger towards Marco had begun to thaw over the past couple of days. Yet, pride hindered her from acknowledging it outright.

She resolved to prioritize matters at the construction site before addressing her personal affairs. However, her plans were interrupted as Carl returned, his expression grave.

"Miss Torres," he began, his tone serious, "we conducted some inquiries into the identity of the assailant. His name is Alex, and our investigation led us to the Universe Group. We halted our probing there, as we sensed it was a sensitive matter. Do you require our further assistance?"

Lorraine's eyes narrowed as she grasped the subtlety of his message—an indication of a potential mole within the Universe Group. Carl tactfully presented the information, leaving the decision to involve them entirely in her hands.

Grateful for Carl's discretion, Lorraine nodded decisively. "I will handle this matter independently. Thank you."

## Chapter 990 Enemy Within

Carl, well-experienced from his years working with Marco, handled the situation properly, showing respect to everyone involved.

This time, Loraine personally escorted him out of the construction site. When she turned around, her expression was chilly, revealing the full weight of her authority as president.

Everyone around her could sense her anger, so they kept silent.

Despite this, Loraine remained poised and organized. She arranged for experts to examine the accident site, investigated everyone who had contact with Alex, and ordered an investigation into Lukas's financial activities.

Once everything was arranged, Loraine returned to the Universe Group.

Sitting in her office, she mused ironically that her safe return from a previous car accident must have disappointed many, and this time, those plotting against her would be even more frustrated by their failure.

After some time, her assistant knocked and entered her office.

After a brief report, a surprising name came up, catching Loraine off guard.

Loraine's expression was icy, her eyes filled with disappointment and bitterness.

Her suspicions were confirmed. She struggled to confront Jaden, a respected figure from her childhood.

Guess who was in charge of the construction site? It was Jaden!

Jaden even came to the construction site for this project, right after she arrived at Zodiac.

With a wry smile, Loraine remembered the harsh treatment she received from Jaden's relative when she first joined the Zodiac branch. Had Jaden been plotting against her from that moment on?

She pushed aside her emotions to analyze the day's events logically.

Alex's initial demand for high compensation provoked her refusal, which he could use to stir the workers' emotions and accuse her of various offenses.

Indeed, that was his plan. But she maintained control, preventing any outbursts.

He failed to cause a scene and was exposed by a video from Marco, so he felt compelled to act.

His ultimate goal was to harm her.

Loraine was puzzled over why someone would target her in such a risky way, given her protective measures and physical training that made her a difficult target for a mere knife attack.

If Carl hadn't intervened, she would've gotten hurt.

This suggested that the conspirator intended to harm but not kill her.

Loraine lowered her gaze to Jaden's name on the document, lost in thought.

Since she suspected Jaden of betraying the Torres family, she naturally wouldn't believe he'd showed mercy for the sake of

their families' relationship.

There must be a deeper reason why he wanted her injured.

And how would Loraine's injury benefit Jaden?

Suddenly, Loraine's heart skipped a beat, and she reached up to touch the necklace around her neck.

The Tear of the Sea lay softly on her chest, rising and falling with her heartbeat. Suddenly, Jaden's strange expression when he saw the necklace flashed into her mind.

She was going to accompany Vincent to see his teacher to gather more details about the necklace.

Could it be that Jaden didn't want her meeting with Vincent's teacher?

As Loraine pondered, her phone rang, and she furrowed her brows at the screen.

The police released their investigation report. Alex maintained that he acted alone for monetary reasons, denying any outside influence.

Lorraine scoffed. Jaden must have paid a hefty sum to keep Alex silent.

The more Jaden paid, the more resolved Loraine became to extract crucial information from Vincent's teacher about the events of that year!

The secrets hidden in the necklace must be important—so significant that after many years, people still used every trick in the book to conceal its existence!

Clutching the necklace, Loraine's resolve hardened. She was determined to uncover the truth, no matter the obstacles.

She believed there must be a valid reason why her uncles had persisted in investigating her parents' deaths for so many years. This necklace was the key!

Suddenly, something struck Loraine. She hesitated, pulled out her phone, and made a call with a puzzled look, saying, "Qbot."

Before long, a sweet image appeared on the phone screen. Qbot said in a soft voice, "Mommy!"

Loraine's expression softened, but her words carried weight, saying, "What does your father want you to do here?"

Qbot started to play dead. Loraine flipped the screen dismissively, saying, "I dislike liars the most."

"Mommy, I won't lie to you! Dad told me to look after you and be smart. I'm will protect you just like Daddy said. You can't hate me!"

The corners of Loraine's mouth curled into a rare smile. Qbot's honesty was always refreshing.

But as she thought of the man who designed Qbot, her smile faded. After a long pause, she said gently, "Qbot, please convey my gratitude to your father."