

## Chapter 993 Harden His Heart

After ending the call, Jaden rushed out of the house. Cayson knew that the phone call was likely about Loraine.

Sitting upright on the sofa, Cayson's expression was serious. He furrowed his brow, anxious that Jaden might harm Loraine secretly. Remembering the words Jaden had spoken, he felt a sinking feeling in his heart.

During their conversation, Cayson had sharply picked up on his father mentioning "back then." When he asked further, his father abruptly changed the subject.

What exactly had happened back then? Why was it a secret from Loraine?

Suddenly, a memory flashed in his mind like a bolt of lightning. He recalled a childhood moment when he had seen his parents in a tense discussion under dim lights while passing the living room.

Though young and unable to grasp the full conversation, he faintly remembered his mother's voice shaking as she said, "We could never let the Torres family know about it..."

Then, his father spotted him, quickly covered his mother's mouth with his hand, lifted Cayson up, and soothingly coaxed him back to sleep.

This memory had always seemed hazy, almost like a dream, but now it resurfaced with clarity, confirming it was not a dream!

A chilling suspicion dawned on Cayson, turning his face ashen.

He still remembered it was shortly after the death of Loraine's parents!

Reflecting on Jaden's words, "We can't let Loraine know," Cayson felt sure his suspicion was correct. Jaden must have wronged the Torres family in the past, a fact yet unknown to them, but Loraine was beginning to suspect...

Cayson realized that if Loraine discovered the truth, she would never be with him!

He had always believed he could compete fairly with Marco, so he had been resistant when Jaden proposed using deceit. But if the Benton family had wronged the Torres family, how could he possibly compete fairly with Marco?

Moreover, as a member of the Benton family himself, he felt responsible for his family!

In an instant, Cayson's face turned ghostly pale. He slumped on the sofa, overwhelmed by his thoughts.

Just then, his mobile phone started to vibrate. He picked it up with no interest and saw an invitation from Jaden.

Initially, he resisted his father's message. As he was about to ignore it, another message from Jaden arrived.

"It doesn't matter that you didn't manage to arrange a meeting with Loraine this time. But one way or another, you must bring her to the banquet next month! And you will win her over!"

Cayson paused, bewildered, and asked with concern, "Dad, what did you just say that Loraine can't find out about?"

Jaden's response was harsh and dismissive. "That's not your concern. Just do as I've instructed!"

Cayson shut his eyes, feeling a deep ache. Was he really about

to ensnare Loraine in such a scheme?

Yet, if he defied Jaden's orders, who could predict what more extreme actions Jaden might take against Loraine!

Cayson had never imagined that he might one day lead Loraine into a situation meant to harm her.

His heart ached numbly; he felt utterly alone with no one to talk to or share the pain of his struggle.

Finally, he couldn't resist calling Loraine.

Desperate to hear her voice for some comfort, he knew he couldn't reveal the truth but hoped she might offer support in other ways, perhaps making him have the courage to stand up to his father.

Clinging to this sliver of hope like an addict, he watched the phone screen, his heart pounding.

But when the phone rang, nobody picked up.

Cayson felt his heart sink with each unanswered call. He chuckled bitterly, promising himself that this would be his last attempt. If she didn't pick up, he'd take it as destiny.

Suddenly, the call connected.

Cayson paused, shocked, then burst into excitement. With hope in his voice, he asked, "Lorrie, there's a banquet at Zodiac next month. The Universe Group has been invited. Would you like to join me?"

Before Loraine could respond, a man's voice echoed in the background, asking, "Who's that on the phone?"

Cayson barely heard Loraine's muffled reply then she said to him, "Cayson, what was that? We'll talk when I get back. I'm tied

up right now."

And with that, she hung up.

Cayson felt a chill run through his hands and feet. He was sure that Vincent was the man on the other end!

First was Marco, and now Vincent. It seemed everyone could invite Loraine out, except him.

His eyes grew cold as he gripped the phone tighter and whispered to himself, "Loraine, you've pushed me to this."



## Chapter 994 The Old Artist

Loraine ended the call. Vincent approached her with something in his hand, driven by curiosity. "Is something happening at your company?"

Just yesterday, his teacher Maia had returned from abroad and was now living in a villa with a picturesque view on the city's outskirts.

Loraine had been eagerly anticipating a meeting with the seasoned artist. After sorting out her company's matters earlier that day, she visited her with Vincent, bearing gifts. Unexpectedly, she received an abrupt call from Cayson during her visit.

Loraine shook her head, clarifying. "No, it was Cayson. He mentioned a banquet scheduled a month from now in Zodiac, and the Universe Group has been invited. However, it's not urgent, so I'll talk to him after I get back."

With those thoughts, Loraine inhaled deeply and glanced at the wooden door ahead, feeling a stir of nerves.

She sensed she was on the verge of uncovering some truth.

Vincent, hearing her response, didn't press further. He nodded, suggesting, "Let's go inside. They know we're coming."

Loraine agreed and stepped into the tranquil old house.

The floors inside shone brightly, immaculate, with the windows diffusing soft sunlight. Beneath the sunlight, an elderly lady rested in a wooden rocking chair, gently waving a fan, her eyes nearly shut as she hummed to the tunes of a gramophone.

Sunlight flickered across the room, illuminating floating specks of dust.

The woman in the chair didn't fit the image of a profound artist but resembled a warm, elderly lady from a rural area. Her demeanor was friendly, her hair a silver hue, and each wrinkle on her face narrated a story of tranquility and peace.

This sight brought a wave of comfort to Loraine. She even began to imagine a serene retirement with Marco, growing old together in a mountain home, enjoying music and peaceful days. What a wonderful life that would be.

As she listened to the song, she suddenly found the tune vaguely familiar. After a moment, she realized with a shock that it was the song she had sung back in her days at Shepherd.

Meanwhile, Vincent bowed with respect and said, "Ms. Watts."

The movement of the rocking chair stopped. The elderly lady opened her eyes and looked up, her face creasing into a smile. She playfully scolded, "You scoundrel, decided to visit me, did you?"

Then her gaze shifted to Loraine standing behind him. Struggling to see without her glasses, she squinted and exclaimed, "Oh, you've finally brought your girlfriend to meet me!"

Vincent's cheeks turned pink as he quickly corrected her, saying, "Ms. Watts, she's young enough to be my niece. Please, stop joking!"

Maia chuckled lightly and teased, "Indeed, you're far too old to be with such a young lady. It seems you're destined to be a bachelor for life."

Vincent felt embarrassed, while Loraine was slightly surprised. She had previously read interviews portraying this old artist as a serious and dignified figure. Yet, here she was, a witty and



humorous elderly woman.

It dawned on Loraine that Vincent's own style likely stemmed from his teacher.

Realizing that the elderly lady was approachable and light-hearted, Loraine relaxed a bit. She figured that interacting with Maia wouldn't be too difficult.

After teasing Vincent, Maia turned to Loraine with a kind look. Gathering her composure, Loraine gave a slight bow and said softly, "Ms. Watts, my name is Loraine Torres. I am a friend of Vincent Wilson. Today, I'm here seeking your help."

Although Vincent had likely informed Maia of their visit beforehand, Loraine was simply observing the proper manners. But when Maia didn't respond immediately, Loraine looked up in anticipation.

"I'm old now and prefer not to entertain guests or exert myself to help others," Maia said slowly.

Loraine was taken aback by this unexpected response. She glanced at Vincent for an explanation. He could only offer a bitter smile, as puzzled by his teacher's behavior as she was.

Maia cleared her throat and continued, "Since you know his last name is Wilson, you must be more than just an acquaintance. What a shame! I was hoping he'd finally bring his girlfriend over. Since you are not his girlfriend, I have no desire to meet with you. Please leave."

Vincent, looking dismayed, said, "Ms. Watts, we..."

"Bring us two cups of tea. Since she's not your girlfriend, why the rush?"

Vincent blinked, then upon hearing the request for tea, he realized Maia wasn't going to send them away. He gave Loraine

a reassuring look, then agreed cheerfully with a smile and headed to another room to make the tea.

At that moment, only Loraine and Maia remained in the silent room, and the music from the gramophone had been turned off by Maia.

Maia gestured with her hand for Loraine to come closer. After looking at Loraine briefly, Maia smiled softly and asked, "Young lady, tell me, why should I help you? If you can convince me, I'll consider what you want me to do for you."

Loraine pressed her lips together and replied calmly, "The music you just stopped is by Shepherd, isn't it?"

