

## Chapter 999 The Craftsman

Loraine pondered the unfamiliar car, her instincts stirring with a certainty she couldn't ignore. The sensation lingered, refusing to be dismissed as mere imagination.

Yet she shook off the unease, attributing it to the unfamiliar setting. She pushed her concerns aside, chalking them up to overthinking, and redirected her attention to Maia and Vincent.

Meanwhile, inside the sleek vehicle, Marco lay tense on the reclined seat, acutely aware of his surroundings. Though concealed behind tinted windows, he couldn't shake off his nervousness.

It dawned on him that all his efforts would amount to nothing if Loraine didn't wait for him.

Anxiety gnawed at Marco, the fear of losing her favor looming in his mind.

The figure who had approached earlier now lingered in the shadows, watching with a silent intensity.

Maia and Vincent remained oblivious to the clandestine observer. As Maia returned to her house, Vincent offered to escort Loraine home, his smile warm and genuine. "Loraine, let me drive you home. It's quite remote here; getting a taxi might prove difficult."

Loraine, however, maintained a polite distance, declining his offer with grace. "Thank you, but my driver is already on his way."

Vincent's expression darkened, a hint of reproach creeping into

his voice. "Not even willing to grant me the honor?"

Lorraine's bashful smile revealed a hint of embarrassment. "I've got what I came for, and we're even on favors. It seems our paths diverge from here. I'm steering clear of the entertainment scene, so I doubt we'll cross again."

Vincent was taken aback by her directness, her resolve to cut ties without hesitation. He struggled to find words in response.

She made it abundantly clear that their obligations to each other were fulfilled, especially concerning the crew incident. Vincent felt indebted to her for her understanding, given his teacher's involvement.

Yet, unable to contain his concern, Vincent blurted out, "Do you know someone's been covertly investigating you? You might be in danger! As a Wilson, if I escorted you home, it could deter any potential threats."

Lorraine's pause conveyed her surprise at Vincent's disclosure. Grateful yet resolute, she declined his offer with a smile. "Thank you, but I'll manage on my own."

It wasn't arrogance, but a flicker of doubt surfaced as she recalled Carl's unexpected appearance at the construction site.

With a chuckle, she realized her forgetfulness in assuming Marco had sent protection without cause.

As Lorraine's driver pulled up, she bid her farewells politely before departing, leaving Vincent standing, his words trapped in his throat, a sense of helplessness washing over him.

Melancholy settled over him as he watched her leave, realizing the loss of a friendship he had cherished.

Now, he recognized Lorraine's true character and sensed there was more to the incident than met the eye. And how he longed



for another taste of her delectable cooking, a chance now lost to him.

With a shake of his head and a resigned sigh, Vincent wasn't entirely disheartened. He held onto the hope that as long as Loraine remained within the Zodiac, there would be opportunities to mend fences. He believed in the power of apology and reconciliation, confident he could earn Loraine's forgiveness. And perhaps he dared to dream of visiting Maia with Loraine again and sharing a meal.

Meanwhile, settled in her car, Loraine retrieved the item Maia had handed her and examined it closely.

It was a note, adorned with elegant handwriting, that read, "The necklace left by your mother was crafted with a very special technique. To my knowledge, only one individual in the Zodiac possesses the skill to replicate such artistry—a craftsman known as Ghosthand. If you want to seek him out, go to the Campus Street near Zodiac University. It is said he dwells there in seclusion."

Pressing the note against her chest, Loraine closed her eyes, feeling a sense of clarity wash over her.

The fog shrouding her parents' past seemed to lift gradually.

She was determined to unravel the truth behind her parents' tragic accident, bringing closure to her uncles and solace to her grandfather. Only then could her parents truly rest in peace.

If Ghosthand was indeed the creator of the necklace, his involvement was crucial. Loraine resolved to take matters into her own hands, setting out for the Campus Street early the next morning.

Dressed in unassuming attire, her long hair secured in a modest ponytail, she blended effortlessly into the youthful crowd.



Yet, her poise and beauty set her apart, drawing curious glances from passersby.

As she prepared to inquire about Ghosthand, a familiar voice called out from behind her, "Lorraine!"



## Chapter 1000 A Familiar Past

Loraine momentarily tensed upon recognizing the voice. She quickly regained her composure and turned around with an air of indifference.

On the bustling street, Marco was behind her, offering a crepe with a hopeful expression. "Would you like a crepe?" he asked, his voice tinged with nervousness.

Loraine's emotions were a mix of nostalgia and surprise upon seeing Marco casually dressed in a plain white shirt, contrasting sharply with his usual polished executive demeanor. Here he was, holding a street-food delicacy among college students, trying to charm her with simple pleasures.

This simple act reminded her of their past.

It was clear to her that Marco was not only trying to win her over but also signaling that despite his high-profile role as the CEO of Solar Company, he was ready to embrace a simpler, more genuine lifestyle with her if that's what she desired.

Loraine could feel her resolve waning, but she maintained a cool exterior. "Why are you here?" she asked sharply.

Marco fumbled for words as he stammered, "I'm not following you. There's a campus recruitment event for Solar Company nearby. I just... saw you by chance."

Loraine's lips curved in a faint, knowing smile. She was too wise to believe in such coincidences.

Still, she chose not to call him out on his apparent fib. Eyeing the crepe he extended, she responded, "Thank you. I can get my

own if I feel like having one."

Disappointment flickered across Marco's face. Sensing his dismay and feeling slightly remorseful, Loraine was about to give in when he gathered his courage and pressed the crepe into her hand.

Trying to hide his anxiety behind a neutral expression, he insisted, "Please take it. You enjoyed it so much last time."

Loraine looked into his earnest eyes, warmth flooding her gaze for a moment. She didn't rebuke him further about the crepe.

Instead, she turned to watch the lively street scene, her smile tinged with nostalgia as she recalled sharing simple meals like this with Marco. It felt like revisiting a cherished chapter from their past, a reminder of a time when life was less complicated.

Marco watched her intently, his own heart pounding with a mix of hope and anxiety, as he tried to read her thoughts from her serene expression.

In his opinion, Loraine seemed to take pleasure in observing the young, energetic male students around her, her smile radiating contentment.

Had she grown weary of him? After her time with Vincent, was she now eyeing youthful college students?

Panic surged within Marco, fearing he no longer appealed to Loraine. Casually, he took off his coat to reveal the toned muscles beneath his fitted shirt, his actions reminiscent of a peacock flaunting its feathers.

His sophisticated aura starkly contrasted with the youthful vibe of the college students, drawing immediate attention. Passersby began snapping photos, and whispers reached Loraine. "He's very good-looking! I wonder what school he's from. Why haven't I seen him before?"

Loraine couldn't help but find his antics rather endearing.

Marco edged closer, clearing his throat before speaking in a resonant tone. "Even after our breakup, we remain friends, correct? Besides, the Solar Company is collaborating with the Universe Group on several projects. As the Solar Company's CEO, may I have the pleasure of inviting you to dine with me on a business basis?"

Loraine glanced at the crepe in her hand, maintaining her composure. "Is a crepe all the CEO of Solar Company is offering me?"

Caught off guard by her response and the possibility of a positive outcome, Marco quickly added, "Consider this a prelude to our meal. If you agree, I'll make reservations at a restaurant right now."

Loraine remained silent, deep in thought.

Vincent had warned her just yesterday about being under surveillance. Though Vincent was unaware of her searching for Ghosthand today, it was conceivable that others might discover it and potentially cause complications.

Walking with Marco through the streets provided Loraine with an excellent disguise, given his prominent identity.

Marco gazed at her with anticipation. Loraine, with a gentle smile, softly replied, "Okay, but just so you know, I have plans right after our meal."

Her agreement was more than Marco had hoped for. He beamed and gave a nod of approval.

As they strolled forward, Loraine's voice grew softer. "Since we're already out here, let's skip looking for a restaurant. We'll just wander and eat whatever catches our eye."

Thrilled at the opportunity to spend additional time with her, Marco eagerly matched her pace.

He discreetly moved closer until they were walking side by side, his gaze lingering on her serene profile.

The busy street scene around them, filled with the delicious scents of street food, seemed to roll back the years to a familiar past.

Feeling his heart race, Marco reached out to gently grasp Loraine's hand.

Caught off guard while scanning the crowd for a stall possibly run by Ghosthand, Loraine tensed up at the unexpected contact.

Their intertwined hands felt surprisingly right, as if rekindling their past connection.

She turned her head instinctively to look at Marco and found him already staring at her with intense, yet somehow nostalgic eyes.

