

Chapter 1265 A Show

The banquet that night concluded disappointingly, yet it achieved its fundamental objectives: to assert authority and mobilize allies. In an effort to stabilize Jorge's emotions and to expedite the search for evidence, Marco and Loraine decided to pause their meetings.

Even their phone conversations had lessened, burdened by the extensive workload imposed by the Cruz family. As two days passed, Marco glanced at his phone and noticed that their last conversation was still marked from the day before.

Marco was overwhelmed by a sudden longing, yet he struggled with how to reconnect. He believed that until he could clear Loraine's name, he had no right to contact her.

Lost in thought, he was interrupted by the butler, who announced, "Sir, Mr. Riley has arrived. He wishes to discuss a potential partnership."

Regaining his composure, Marco stored his phone, pinched the bridge of his nose to ease his weariness, and instructed, "Please, show him in."

Shortly after, Jorge entered the study alone, without Keely tagging along, evidently on official business. Yet upon arrival, he inquired, "Marco, have you ended things with Loraine yet? Keely is fine now, so I'll hold off on legal action, but you cannot keep that callous woman by your side any longer."

Marco's hand froze. As he maintained his usual detached demeanor, he deftly steered the conversation away, asking, "You came to discuss business?"

At the moment, Marco lacked concrete evidence to convince Jorge of Loraine's innocence. There were no witnesses to the incident, with only the surveillance footage left to be analyzed by Qbot.

As for ending things with Loraine, Marco would sooner relinquish all he possessed than part with her, unless she chose to leave first.

Jorge noticed the shift in conversation and furrowed his brow, about to interject when a disturbance outside interrupted them. Suddenly, two men burst through the door. The butler, recognizing them, made no move to stop their entry.

Jorge was familiar with both individuals; one belonged to the esteemed Wilson family, and the other was a well-known artist, both connections of Loraine.

It was clear they were here to confront Marco.

The disheveled artist shot Jorge a disdainful look, dismissing him as a fool, before striding past him. He pulled out a chair, sat down, and crossed his legs in a relaxed pose across from Marco. The other man, with his sculpted, idol-like physique, took a seat beside his companion. Even before speaking, their presence chilled the room.

Wesley, tapping his fingertips on the arm of his chair, began in a low tone, "Marco, I'll cut straight to the point. I'm here today to seek an explanation on behalf of our Lorrie."

Vincent scoffed in agreement, "Marco, at the engagement, you made heartfelt vows, promising never to let Lorrie be mistreated. How much time has passed since? Already, you're failing to keep those promises? Marco, I've warned you, don't assume you can neglect Lorrie just because you now head the Cruz family. The Wilson family stands with her!"

The two exchanged glances and declared in unison, "If you



can't properly care for Lorrie, you should break up with her."

Jorge, witnessing the confrontation, couldn't hide his displeasure, finding their approach domineering. Marco appeared subdued, offering no counterarguments, his demeanor only shifting when the topic of breaking up was raised.

Seeing his friend so demeaned, Jorge couldn't contain his frustration and blurted out, "How can you treat him this way? What has Marco done to deserve this?"

"What's it to you?" Wesley retorted sharply. "Marco hasn't said a word. What are you to him? Can you speak for him?"

Jorge bristled with annoyance and was about to respond when Wesley, visibly exasperated, snorted dismissively, "Marco, can you not even make your own choices? If Lorrie ends up with you, I dread to think how much she'll have to endure. I won't stand by and watch her suffer. Enough is enough." He thrust the engagement ring box at Marco, declaring, "Lorrie is done with you!"

Marco caught the thrown box, his face draining of color. Upon opening it, he recognized Loraine's ring and was momentarily speechless, struck by the thought that Loraine might truly want to end their relationship.

As Marco ran his fingers around the ring, he noticed something. Raising his eyes to meet Wesley's, he caught the unspoken message in them. He played along, loudly questioning, "Is this really Loraine's wish, or are you acting on your own? I won't accept this!"

He knew the ring was a fake. Unlike their actual rings, which were engraved with each other's names inside, this one was merely a replica. Although he was confused about what Wesley and Vincent were up to, he played along anyway.

Wesley scoffed, "It doesn't matter whether it's Lorrie's idea. What matters is that we can't let her marry someone who fails to protect her. The ring's returned, and the engagement's over. From now on, you two have nothing to do with each other."

With those final words, Wesley and Vincent left as abruptly as they had arrived, clearly having come solely to sever the engagement and rebuke Marco.

The color drained from Marco's face. Dejected, he turned an empty look to Jorge.

"Now that Loraine has ended things with me, are you satisfied?"



Chapter 1266 Biding Our Time To Strike

Jorge was at a loss for words. He had hoped that Marco would end things with Loraine, but witnessing Marco being criticized and demeaned before their engagement was called off was not what he had intended.

Furthermore, Marco was usually reserved with his emotions, and this was the first time Jorge had seen such visible pain and frustration on his face.

This realization made Jorge feel unexpectedly guilty.

Meanwhile, he was angry with the two men who had just given Marco an earful. Indignant on Marco's behalf, he exclaimed, "Were those Loraine's family members we just saw? How could her family behave like that? No wonder Loraine acted out against Keely!"

Marco met his gaze intently, then posed a question. "Jorge, have you ever considered something? If what we've seen is true, then considering past events, Keely has been harmed by Loraine not once, but twice. Shouldn't she be afraid of Loraine? Why would she insist on Loraine taking her to rest, instead of you?"

Jorge was quick to catch on to his implication. Marco's question made him reflect on Keely's demeanor when he had first mentioned Loraine and Marco after picking her up. It seemed her fear was almost instinctual.

Normally, even if someone had lost their memories, their subconscious would retain a visceral aversion to those they



had previously feared or disliked. Yet, Keely had been uncharacteristically clingy towards both Loraine and Marco.

Jorge momentarily entertained this contradiction, but quickly dismissed it, chastising himself for even thinking it. He took a deep breath and replied, trying to convince both Marco and himself, "Keely is unwell. Her mental state is akin to that of a child now."

Marco's lips twitched into a wry smile. "That's not an excuse. It doesn't explain everything. You know deep down—even a three-year-old, or even the least sentient creatures, would naturally avoid someone who's hurt them."

Jorge narrowed his eyes slightly, while Marco, looking drained, said, "I'm not in the right state of mind today. Let's discuss the collaboration another time. I'll have the butler escort you out."

With that, Marco effectively ended the conversation.

Jorge's lips twitched, wanting to add something, but seeing Marco's earnest distress, he realized the depth of his upset about breaking up with Loraine. With a nod, he silently turned and left.

After he left, Marco took out the ring box again, his lips pressed tightly together.

He knew the encounter was staged, but recalling what Wesley had said, Marco felt uneasy. It was clear Wesley's and Vincent's visit wasn't just for show; there must be a deeper message.

Inspecting the ring box, Marco noticed something. He peeled back the lining and discovered a small note hidden beneath.

The note was written in a familiar hand, bearing a simple message. "Let us bide our time to strike."

A chuckle escaped him as Marco pictured Loraine's clever,



mischievous smile. He wondered why she hadn't just called him to explain her plan.

He smoothed out the note and placed it inside a book, contemplating its meaning. Clearly, Loraine was signaling him to wait, but for what?

A realization dawned on Marco, a possibility he had been reluctant to accept.

He suspected Keely had regained her memories, and her fall had been orchestrated.

Yet, without concrete evidence and considering Jorge's affection for Keely, they could not act rashly. They needed to let Keely expose her own deceit.

This approach would allow Jorge to see Keely's true nature for himself, preserving their friendship and sparing Marco from any guilt associated with past obligations.

How, then, could they prompt Keely to reveal her deceit?

Marco pondered this as he picked up a collaboration plan from his desk, cycling through various strategies.

Meanwhile, Jorge returned home, his mood heavy with Marco's words echoing in his head.

Opening his door, he found Keely playing contentedly in the living room. Something didn't sit right with him, and he asked, "Keely, why didn't you let me take you to rest that day? Why did you insist on Loraine taking you?"

