

Chapter 1283 A Deliberate Encounter

Loraine and Jennie turned toward the source of the voice. Jennie gasped in admiration.

The man before them exuded a distinctive allure, his black hair and deep blue eyes that mirrored the depth of the ocean, captivating them instantly. His features—deep-set eyes, a high nose bridge, and thin lips curved into a semblance of a smile—spoke of elegance and a hint of mystery.

He was dressed in a perfectly tailored suit that seemed to emphasize his refined demeanor.

Loraine's eyes flickered momentarily, sensing a faint resemblance to Marco. She quickly dismissed it, attributing it to the man's good manners and impressive family background—attributes often shared by powerful individuals.

The man spoke with a noticeable Eplistan accent as he showed Loraine a tablet screen displaying a recorded live video of her recent press conference.

Assuming he was just another admirer who approached to greet her, she responded with a nod and a calm smile, "Yes, that's me."

The man complimented her softly and then asked courteously, "May I join you for a conversation?"

"Of course," Loraine replied, gesturing for a waiter to bring another coffee.

She turned back to the man and asked, "Sir, what would you like to discuss?"

The man said, "You can call me Mr. K. I come from Eplistan and am here in Kitay seeking reliable business partners for my family. I've heard about Kitay's Smart Park project, which has gained popularity abroad."

Before Loraine could respond, Jennie enthusiastically interjected, "Mr. K, did you know that the Smart Park project was actually created by Loraine?"

Mr. K's expression shifted to one of surprised delight as he turned his attention back to Loraine. "I was aware that Ms. Loraine was the CEO of Universe Group and that the Smart Park was a Universe Group initiative, but I hadn't realized it was designed by you. You are truly talented."

Loraine remained humble and said, "Thank you, but the success of Smart Park owes much to the dedicated team behind it, not just me. It's wonderful to see such interest in our work."

While Loraine found it somewhat coincidental to meet someone keen on the Smart Park project in a random café, she didn't dwell on it. The project's widespread popularity made such encounters plausible.

And the mention of potential cooperation intrigued Loraine. Eplistan was renowned for its industrial heritage and noble traditions. Engaging with the aristocracy of Eplistan wasn't merely a business transaction; it was a matter of honor and prestige, akin to receiving international recognition.

With these thoughts in mind, Loraine tactfully guided the conversation back to Smart Park, discussing its future potential and strategic development. Mr. K engaged earnestly, speaking eloquently and offering insightful responses.

Loraine found herself increasingly impressed, beginning to view him as a promising business partner.

Jennie, whose family business wasn't directly involved in such ventures, listened quietly throughout.

Amid their conversation, Jennie received a call and abruptly announced she had to leave for an urgent matter. Despite enjoying her discussion with Mr. K, Loraine hesitated about remaining alone with a stranger.

Just as she contemplated leaving with Jennie, Mr. K suggested, "Ms. Torres, why don't we exchange contact information? I'm quite interested in Universe Group's projects and may reach out soon to discuss potential collaboration."

Loraine weighed the opportunity carefully. She recognized the potential benefits of partnering with someone of Mr. K's stature in Eplistan, seeing it as a strategic move to expand Universe Group's international reach.

Finding no reason to decline, she smiled and retrieved her phone to exchange contacts with him.

Mr. K, maintaining his composed demeanor, reciprocated by adding Loraine's contact information on his phone. He then gracefully stood up, bowing slightly to Loraine. "I look forward to our future collaboration."

Jennie, who seemed to have formed a favorable opinion of Mr. K, playfully saluted back at him before linking arms with Loraine to leave.

Loraine nodded politely in Mr. K's direction as they exited the café together.

Left alone, Mr. K's eyes held a curious smile as he adjusted his velvet hat. He murmured, "No wonder Marco is drawn to this woman. She is indeed astute and valuable."

Without turning around, he calmly instructed someone who had discreetly approached him, "Follow her and keep her under observation."



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Chapter 1284 The Agreement

A few days later, Loraine went to work as usual. Stepping out of her car, she glanced around, yet saw nothing.

She rubbed her temples as she thought to herself, "Have I been overworking and stressing too much? Am I becoming paranoid?"

For several days, she had sensed someone watching her. Each time she paused to look around or directed her team to investigate, they found nothing.

Loraine refused to dismiss her feelings as mere illusions. Her intuition had been instrumental to her success, and she trusted that if something felt wrong, it likely was.

After a moment's hesitation, she pulled out her phone and texted Rowan about her suspicions. His reply came swiftly. "I'll arrange for someone to protect you secretly. Contact me if anything unusual occurs."

With a sense of relief, Loraine responded the message and entered her company. She suspected the observer might be linked to Keely, but Rowan's involvement reassured her.

Recently, she had been inundated with work, barely managing any sleep. Her project with Edwin had kicked off smoothly but significantly added to her workload.

Marco, too, was overwhelmed, juggling responsibilities with both the Cruz family and Solar Company, which left them minimal time for personal interaction.

Their brief phone calls were squeezed between meetings and deadlines. Their longing for each other remained strong.

Though they missed each other deeply, they didn't succumb to anxiety. Instead, they found comfort in thinking of each other during their hectic schedules, which brought a sense of fulfillment and stability.

Today, they managed to carve out time for a video call.

Seeing Marco's handsome face, slightly shadowed with stubble, on her screen, Loraine felt profoundly connected and happy.

She shared her feelings, and Marco thoughtfully responded, "Maybe it's because we're both striving towards the same future. Knowing our current efforts are building a better life makes us feel perpetually connected."

Loraine nodded, her feelings resonating with his words. She said, "I wonder when we'll finally have some peace. I miss Grandpa."

Their departure from Vagow had been a necessity, but it now seemed to push them further from their goals. The serene days when Marco's true identity had been revealed and they lived quietly at Loraine's family estate felt like echoes from a distant, dreamlike past.

Marco was silent for a moment before he spoke softly yet firmly. "Once this busy period is over, we'll return to Vagow and get married. No matter what happens, nothing will stop us." He looked into Loraine's eyes, adding, "I promise you the grandest wedding, surrounded by everyone's blessings!"

Moved by his words, Loraine gazed at Marco with trust in her eyes. "Okay, I believe you, and I'll wait for you," she replied.

Emotion swelled in Marco's eyes; his throat tightened as he reached out, attempting to touch Loraine's face through the screen. His voice was hoarse with longing as he uttered her name, wishing he could be by her side.

Their emotions peaked just as there was a knock on Loraine's office door.

Snapped back to reality, Loraine coughed lightly. "I have to go now, back to work."

Reluctantly, Marco nodded. They exchanged a lingering look before ending the call as another knock echoed.

Taking a deep breath, Loraine swiftly resumed her composed, commanding CEO demeanor. "Come in," she called.

Remy entered without delay. "Ms. Torres, a businessman from Eplistan contacted us. They're interested in collaborating with both Universe Group and Solar Company. The board wants your opinion."

A businessman from Eplistan? Interested in collaborating with both Universe Group and Solar Company?

Loraine immediately thought of Mr. K whom she had met at the café before. After a brief reflection, she said, "Tell them I'll arrange a meeting, but it must include representatives from both Universe Group and Solar Company."

This arrangement would also allow her to see Marco.

Remy quickly messaged the partner. Moments later, she reported back, "Ms. Torres, they agreed. You can decide the time and place."

Loraine nodded in approval. Meanwhile, in a high-end club, a man in a black suit, impeccably dressed with not a crease on his trousers and a velvet hat, looked both handsome and noble.

He had just finished replying to a message and tucked his phone away.

Suddenly, a pair of arms wrapped around his shoulders. A



beautiful, seductive woman with an Eplistan accent encircled him, giggling, "So, you get to meet Marco? Darling, you must take me along."



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