

Chapter 1285 Meeting For The First Time

Taking advantage of the opportunity, Loraine contacted Marco and informed him about the upcoming meeting with a businessman from Eplistan.

Marco saw this as a rare opportunity and readily agreed to assist Loraine with whatever she needed.

Loraine coordinated the schedules of the three parties and set the meeting for three days later at a stylish coffee shop, which all parties agreed upon without objection.

On the appointed day, Marco finished his work and headed directly to the coffee shop.

Prior to arriving, he had conducted a thorough investigation into Mr. K, but the information he gathered was sparse. It confirmed that Mr. K was indeed an aristocrat from Eplistan, though specific details about his family background remained elusive.

This wasn't surprising; Eplistan maintained a royal system, and while the royalty's influence had waned, aristocratic families still valued their heritage and often kept their involvement in commerce hidden.

Reflecting on the investigation's limited findings, Marco pondered whether Mr. K was trustworthy or simply adept at concealing his background.

Normally, Marco would have been more cautious with such a secretive partner. However, due to Loraine's involvement and



his desire to meet her and ensure her safety, he decided to attend in person.

Therefore, instead of fetching Loraine, he arrived alone first to observe any potential signs of trouble.

As Marco entered the reserved private room, his deep eyes scanned for hidden security cameras or any potential threats. Satisfied that everything seemed secure, he turned to leave but suddenly sensed movement behind him. Swiftly pivoting, he narrowly avoided colliding with a coquettish and beautiful woman who had stumbled.

With a cold demeanor, Marco made no move to assist her. The woman steadied herself and teased in a seductive voice, "A man who ignores a lady's plight won't win her favor, you know."

Ignoring her comment, Marco's gaze remained piercing as he asked bluntly, "Who are you?"

The woman giggled, covering her mouth with her delicate hand. As her laughter subsided, she leaned casually against the wall, her eyes softening as she studied Marco. "You're so serious. I like that," she remarked, reaching out to touch him.

Marco instinctively dodged her touch, prompting another smile from her. "I'm Caroline Garcia. Perhaps you've heard of me," she said.

Marco's expression remained impassive. "You are the princess of Eplistan?" he stated.

Caroline's smile widened proudly. "Indeed. Marco, your reputation preceded you even in the royal palace. I know you're a handsome and capable man. I wish to have you as mine."

Marco's expression finally shifted, his brow furrowing not just at Caroline's arrogance but also at her audacious words.

Uncertain of her intentions, he replied icily, "I'm afraid I can't fulfill your wish. It doesn't matter which princess you are. I have a girlfriend who's soon to be my wife. Please behave yourself."

Caroline brushed off his rebuke with a chuckle, insisting, "Your relationship status doesn't concern me. I don't care who you fancy; I just want us to enjoy ourselves."

Marco's frown deepened, taken aback by her brazenness.

Suddenly, a deep, commanding voice interrupted from behind them. "Caroline, causing trouble again?"

The deliberate sound of footsteps approached leisurely. Marco turned to see a well-dressed man with a single decorative eyeglass and a friendly smile. The man glanced at him and nodded subtly.

Marco narrowed his eyes slightly, sensing an air of danger and unpredictability.

He surmised that this was likely Mr. K, the businessman from Eplistan for their meeting today.

Mr. K spoke in an apologetic tone. "I apologize, Mr. Cruz. Caroline is a product of her upbringing by the esteemed queen mother, often speaking without restraint. I hope you understand."

Marco remained aloof in his response. "I'm here strictly for business cooperation. I won't entertain anything else. You bringing her here raises doubts about the seriousness of our collaboration and your commitment."

Mr. K's smile widened, and he gracefully admitted, "You're right; that was my mistake."

Marco studied Mr. K's face, noticing how his features seemed



+120 Points at most
even more striking in the light. Marco's heart skipped a beat as
a strange sense of familiarity washed over him.

It reminded him of his first meeting with Clifford, that
inexplicable connection akin to a bond of blood.

Then, his thoughts turned to a secret of the Cruz family—one
known only to a few.

His late mother, who passed away in an accident decades ago,
was rumored to come from a noble royal lineage with deep
historical roots.



Chapter 1286 A Meal Filled With Tension

Marco struggled to uncover more information about his mother, and just as Melvin was about to reveal something about the past, he was poisoned and ended up in the hospital.

Mr. K, who bore a resemblance to him, triggered Marco's memories of his mother.

And Mr. K bringing Caroline to the meeting implied he had connections with the royal family, or perhaps he was even a member of it.

Was it truly a coincidence that Mr. K appeared in Loraine's life, or did Mr. K intentionally seek her out because he was aware of his mother's identity?

If it was the latter, why didn't Mr. K simply reveal his identity to Loraine? Why did he choose to be so discreet?

Suddenly, Marco's mind raced. For decades, Melvin had desperately sought the truth but came up empty-handed, and his mother's death remained shrouded in mystery. All clues hinted at a sinister and profound secret within the royal family.

Thus, even if Mr. K was related to his mother, it didn't mean he was on her side.

Marco's eyelids fluttered briefly. He quickly buried his doubts and responded politely, revealing nothing out of the ordinary.

Meanwhile, Loraine arrived and was unaware of the underlying tension. Her face lit up with a smile when she spotted Marco



from a distance. She approached him eagerly and clasped his hand with affection before greeting Mr. K. Then she cast a confused look at Caroline.

Caroline observed Loraine's hand, forced a smile, and reintroduced herself with a hint of pride.

To her dismay, Loraine exhibited neither surprise nor envy. She merely offered a polite greeting and then turned to whisper to Marco.

Marco, who had previously been distant, was remarkably tender while speaking with Loraine. He bowed his head to listen more closely to her and his expression softened into a gentle smile as she spoke.

Caroline gritted her teeth as jealousy surged within her. Even though the royal family had become more symbolic, their status remained elevated. Renowned for her beauty in Eplistan's aristocratic circles, countless men desired her.

But Marco had shown indifference to her advances and even rejected her coldly.

The fact that she couldn't win his heart while he showed such gentleness to another woman was utterly intolerable to her.

Caroline smiled, trying to maintain her composure. "Mr. Cruz, weren't you here to discuss business with us? Let's not waste any more time. Please, have a seat."

Marco looked at Caroline without a word and waited until Loraine nodded before entering the room.

Loraine noticed Caroline's hostility and met her gaze with a puzzled look.

In the private room, as Marco was pulling out a chair for Loraine and preparing to invite her to sit down, Caroline



promptly seated herself and arrogantly declared, "I want to sit here."

Marco's expression darkened instantly. He hadn't expected Caroline to be so brazen in front of Loraine.

Just as he was about to ask Caroline to move or find another seat, Loraine, who had sensed the tension, gave him a subtle shake of her head.

After all, the partnership hadn't even begun yet, and Loraine didn't want something so minor to jeopardize everything. To her, Caroline's hostility seemed childish and was not worth getting upset over.

Marco had to hold back his anger. He pulled out another chair for Loraine and then sat on her other side, avoiding sitting next to Caroline.

Caroline's expression soured.

Loraine pretended not to notice anything and tried to ease the situation. She said with a smile, "Your Highness, I've always admired Eplistani culture. This is the first time I've seen you in person, and you're as beautiful as I imagined."

Seeing Loraine remain so calm, Mr. K, who had been observing, smiled and said, "Caroline has a fiery temper, something her family has always struggled with. Thank you for your patience."

He looked at Caroline, who looked displeased and was about to retort. She quickly abandoned the idea and bowed her head in anger.

Mr. K maintained his composure and took charge of the situation like a true host. He summoned the waiter to serve the dishes and effortlessly ended the awkward scene.

The dishes were promptly served. It consisted entirely of

Eplistani cuisine.

Finding a restaurant that served genuine Eplistani cuisine was challenging. However, since Mr. K was a true aristocrat of Eplistan, he had the authority to decide where they would dine.

Once all the dishes were served, Caroline elegantly cut a small piece of pie and tasted it. She glanced at Loraine and scoffed. "It's nearly impossible to enjoy genuine royal cuisine anywhere else. You only get to eat these dishes because of me, even though I'm already tired of them."

Loraine smiled but remained silent. Still dissatisfied, Caroline attempted to pass Loraine and serve food onto Marco's plate. Unsurprisingly, he avoided her gesture and looked at her with a stern expression.

Loraine was positioned between them and she easily grasped the situation. With a calm demeanor, she tasted the dish before her and remarked with a smile, "This is quite tasty, but perhaps we shouldn't overindulge."

Caroline interpreted Loraine's comment as a prelude to open hostility. With a provocative and excited look, she challenged, "Why? What's the matter with it? You're just a civilian. Do you really think you know more than the royal family's chef?"

