

## Chapter 416 Exhibition

Summing up all his courage, Grady forced himself not to be timid and met Marco's gaze head-on.

Marco held Grady's gaze for a moment before breaking into a smile, leaning in to whisper something into his ear.

"I won't always be her ex-husband," he murmured firmly. "I'm determined to win Loraine back, sooner or later."

Grady was taken aback by his words.

Meanwhile, Marco had already moved on, striding towards the stage to greet Loraine, who had just concluded her speech.

Gritting his teeth, Grady rose and followed Marco.

Despite his deep respect for Marco, he was resolved not to back down when it came to Loraine.

Loraine was the only woman he had ever loved. If she were still married to Marco, Grady would have kept his feelings and blessings to himself. But now that they were divorced, Grady believed he had the right to fight for his love.

The fear of living with regret if he didn't at least try was driving him forward.

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Grady's heart raced as he took several deep breaths to calm himself.

Finally, he mustered the courage to step forward.

"Loraine, I'd like to extend an invitation for you to attend the banquet hosted by the Cruz family."

Seeing Loraine's furrowed brow, Grady hastily added, "I understand you're busy, but this isn't just a party, it's an exhibition co-hosted by the Cruz family and other antique aficionados. It will showcase numerous renowned works. I think it would be beneficial for you to attend, particularly considering your recent work on the new commercial district!"

Loraine seemed taken aback. "An exhibition?"

Due to Wesley's influence, she had a keen interest in art.

Seeing Loraine's reaction, Grady grew more enthusiastic.

"Yes. There will be pieces from renowned artists like Harry Hole, Kellan Ted, Endy Hewitt, not to mention some of Endy's sculpture designs, jewelry, handicrafts, and other valuable items. Loraine, wouldn't you like to see these?"

Grady focused on gauging Loraine's reaction, oblivious to Marco's increasingly dark expression.



"I heard that your father was quite the collector," he continued. "He used to attend some of the Cruz family's exhibitions with your mother..."

Loraine seemed surprised. "My parents attended the Cruz family exhibitions?"

This was seemingly the first time she'd heard about her parents from someone outside her family, and these distant and vague memories suddenly seemed more tangible.

Seeing Loraine's interest, Grady's eyes lit up, and he nodded vigorously.

"Yes, Mr. Torres was quite learned in the arts. Your uncle, Mr. T, likely followed in your father's footsteps when he chose to be an artist."

Loraine had never heard this from Wesley, but she did recall that her father's room held many pieces by Endy Hewitt.

The arrangement of Farley's room remained untouched over the years, with the servants cleaning it periodically. Occasionally, Loraine's grandfather would visit the room when he missed his eldest son.

Loraine knew that her father was a mechanical engineer with a keen interest in mechanical pocket watches.

As a child, Loraine often listened to stories about her father while lying on her grandfather's lap.

Her grandfather would gently touch the pocket watches left by Loraine's father, often choking back sobs.

The collection of watches that Farley had left behind were all meticulously crafted, considered rare and luxury items on the market. His most cherished pocket watch, which was never apart from him, was

unfortunately destroyed in the car accident.

The memories Loraine held of her father were essentially formed by these pieces of his past.

Upon learning that Endy Hewitt's works would be exhibited, she found herself surprisingly persuaded.

She wondered if she might discover some traces of her father within those artistic creations.

With this thought in mind, Loraine eventually decided to accept Grady's invitation.

"Thank you for sharing these stories about my father. I'll find time to attend the exhibition."

Hearing her acceptance, Grady was elated and expressed his gratitude with a nod.

Simultaneously, Marco's face took on a gloomy expression. He clasped Loraine's hand and questioned, "Are you truly planning on attending the Cruz family's event?"

Perplexed, Loraine looked at him and replied, "Yes. Is there a problem?"

"Don't..."

Marco had intended to dissuade Loraine, but he feared that his objection might cause her to feel repulsed.

Under Loraine's scrutinizing gaze, he stuttered momentarily before concocting a diversion.

"I also have an interest in the arts. Allow me to accompany you."

Lorraine fell silent. She was certain that Marco was being dishonest.

She was acutely aware that Marco was exhibiting signs of jealousy. His behavior was frustrating yet she felt powerless to alter it.

Just then, a voice interjected their discussion.

"Don't bother. I will accompany Lorrie at the event."



## Chapter 417 Men Are Not Permitted.

Securing his leave from Patrick wasn't easy for Cayson. When he finally succeeded, his eyes landed on Loraine.

As he moved towards her, he picked up on their conversation. Marco, again, seemed to have intentions of bothering Loraine.

Cayson sneered, interrupting their dialogue.

"Looks like I'm Lorrie's companion for the party."

Saying this, Cayson subtly wedged himself between Loraine and Marco, separating the two.

Marco looked vexed, his muscles tightened in a manner resembling a beast ready to pounce.

"Wouldn't it be wiser to focus on your affairs? Must you always be a nuisance to Loraine? Is that in the CEO of Universe Group's job description?"

If he desired to win Loraine back, he knew he needed to create a world for just the two of them. However, the presence of Cayson and Grady posed a challenge. How could he nurture a relationship with Loraine amidst their presence?

Cayson, undeterred, held Marco's gaze.

Loraine, caught in the crossfire, rubbed her forehead in exasperation.

Chapter 417 Men Are Not Permitted. 🎁 +120 Points at most

Why was she the men's preferred target for their shenanigans?

Even Cayson, who usually remained composed, was dragged into this mess. She surmised Marco was a bad influence on Cayson.

Feeling drained, Loraine pushed the two men aside, asserting, "I don't require a companion, and certainly not you accompanying me."

This declaration left both Marco and Cayson taken aback. As they geared up to respond, a shy voice from Grady cut through the tension.

"The party is strictly for ladies. Gentlemen are not permitted."

Hearing this, Marco and Cayson simultaneously shot Grady a fiery glance, as if asking why he was allowed to attend.

Grady, head lowered, responded with a shy smile, "The Cruz family is hosting this exhibition. As the host, my presence is a given."

The rule frustrated Marco and Cayson. They were powerless, given the Cruz family's host status.

Grady appeared to be an endearing and bashful young man, yet his eyes betrayed a sense of self-satisfaction. He concealed his delight in secrecy.

He was aware of Marco's and Cayson's affection for Loraine. They were his romantic rivals and formidable at that.

In the game of wealth, looks, and intellect, Grady felt



Chapter 417 Men Are Not Permitted. 🎁 +120 Points at most  
his odds were thin.

But this time, he had the upper hand.

A silent rivalry unfolded among the three men, which Loraine was oblivious to.

To be precise, she no mood to pay attention to it.

Her gaze lowered, her thoughts strayed to her father.

Her father's pocket watch lay shattered beyond repair.

Nevertheless, the sight of the pocket watch made her comprehend her father's admiration for that particular artist.

Endy Hewitt held a distinctive knack for adding captivating allure to stark machinery.

She appeared to touch upon the spiritual echoes left by her father within the shattered timepiece. This aroused a keen interest in Loraine to view more of Endy's creations. Perhaps they could unearth some traces of her father.

Then she was momentarily lost in her thoughts. The celebration party swiftly drew to a close.

As Loraine ambled towards the car park, ready to summon her driver, a sleek black automobile halted beside her. The window descended, unveiling Marco's charming visage. He offered, "Loraine, allow me to take you home."

Then, Cayson arrived in his car.

"Lorrie, your grandpa entrusted me to bring you home."



Grady also lowered his window and chimed in, "Let's ride together. I've plenty to share about the Cruz family's exhibit!"

A slight twitch played at the corner of Loraine's lips. She found herself at a loss for words.

Just then, another car pulled up behind them, honking its horn.

"Lorrie!" Jennie leaned out. As soon as she finished her greeting, she noticed the trio vying for Loraine's company. She stifled a laugh, then pulled back. She suggested, "Well... How about I leave now?"

Without missing a beat, Loraine opened the door of Jennie's car and hopped in.

"Get moving! Quick!"

As Jennie cast a glance at the crestfallen men in the other cars, a wicked smile crept onto her face. She revved up the engine and sped away.

Inside the car, Jennie stole a sidelong look at her friend and teased, "Lorrie, out of the three men back there, Marco's the assertive CEO, Cayson's the dutiful knight, and Grady's the tender youth. Who's your pick?"

Loraine pressed a hand to her forehead and replied, "Do you think I'm selecting a suitor? I... I reject them all!"

Cayson was like a sibling to her, having grown up together. Grady was her junior and she considered him just a friend. But Marco...

Loraine was taken aback.

Chapter 417 Men Are Not Permitted. 🎁 +120 Points at most

What did Marco represent in her life now?

She blinked in surprise, her heart racing, her mind in disarray.

After all that transpired, she couldn't deceive herself any longer. She acknowledged that she had a connection with Marco.

But she was at a loss to identify what Marco stood for in her life. Her former spouse? A partner? An intrusive presence? Or perhaps, something more...



## Chapter 418 Different Thoughts

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After Loraine left in Jennie's car, the three men continued to confront each other.

Marco shot a frosty look at the other two, warning, "Stay away from Loraine!" He was the first to exit the parking lot.

Grady clenched the steering wheel, whispering to himself, "Giving up isn't in my nature..."

As Cayson's car passed Grady's, he announced in a soft yet determined voice, "We'll see. I'm not giving up on Lorrie either."

Grinding his teeth, Grady slowly started his car and drove away.

His mother had insisted he attend the banquet to mend fences with Loraine, but he was genuinely glad to see her and extend an invitation to his exhibition.

When Grady came home, a sweet voice welcomed him from the entrance.

"Grady!"

A beautiful girl ran up to him, casually putting her hands on his arm and shaking it.

"Grady, why are you so late?"

His smile faded instantly. He extricated his arm and

responded coldly, "Kassidy, why are you still here?"

Kassidy, a distant relative of his mother's, had moved into his home under the pretense of attending the exhibition. Her incessant pestering had begun to wear on Grady.

Kassidy pouted and stamped her foot, acting like a spoiled brat. "Grady, do you find me annoying? Your mother asked you to take good care of me!"

Yet again...

Kassidy had completely obliterated Grady's good mood from his encounter with Loraine.

Florence's request had been a simple pleasantry, but Kassidy had taken it quite literally.

Barely keeping his impatience in check, he muttered, "Kassidy, I have to prepare for the exhibition. I don't have the time to entertain you."

Tears welled up in Kassidy's eyes. She dashed into the living room towards Florence, who was seated on the sofa.

"Auntie, Grady doesn't want to talk to me..."

To her surprise, Florence didn't indulge her theatrics. Instead, she stood up and eagerly asked Grady, "Did Loraine accept our invitation?"

Blushing, Grady happily nodded in confirmation.

Florence breathed a sigh of relief and smiled. "That's good. I was afraid she'd turn down our family."

After a pause, Grady risked a glance at Kassidy before



of distinction, filled with accomplished individuals. Even if there were unclarified rumors about Loraine circulating, Florence found herself willing to overlook them, given the family's reputation.

Moreover, the progression of the new business district was advancing at a steady pace. It was apparent to all that Loraine was a remarkable woman whose prosperous future was virtually assured.

Florence recognized that her son was still enamored with Loraine.

Considering this, she was more than willing to aid her son.

Florence took great pride in her strategic thinking. She firmly believed that if Grady took the initiative and Loraine wasn't opposed to it, she would undoubtedly seize the opportunity to become part of the Cruz family.

If a marriage could establish a connection between their family and the Torres family, they might even gain recognition from the influential Cruz family in Zodiac and be relocated to enjoy a life of luxury and prestige.

Engulfed in her strategic planning, Florence disregarded Cassidy entirely. She failed to notice the potent resentment and defiance flickering in the eyes of the neglected girl.

Cassidy wondered who Loraine was. Why were Florence and Grady so preoccupied with her?