

## Chapter 419 Compare With Each Other

---

The day for the Cruz family's exhibition was finally here.

In a show of respect, Loraine donned her finest attire, bringing along a meticulously chosen present.

A crowd of guests, adorned in striking attire, congregated outside the house of the Cruz family.

Each invited lady was decked out in their finest, catching the eye of anyone who glanced their way.

But the moment Loraine stepped out of her vehicle, they all faded into the background. Adorned in a simple yet elegant white dress, Loraine instantaneously became the center of attention amidst the crowd. Numerous individuals gazed at her with admiration, their whispers filling the air.

Unfazed by the attention, she strode inside with composure.

An elegantly dressed woman emerged from the hall, a friendly grin on her face, reaching out to take Loraine's hand.

"Loraine, you've finally arrived. You are my guest of honor tonight. Allow me to escort you in personally."

Loraine was taken aback.

Why this sudden change in Florence's attitude? It was drastically different from before.

Although Grady had mentioned that Florence wished to make amends, Loraine had brushed it off.

But Florence's changed demeanor, her sudden warmth, it was all so peculiar to Loraine.

"Mrs. Cruz, thank you, but I can manage..."

"Don't worry about it." Florence interjected before Loraine could finish, pulling her into the room. She then began introducing Loraine to her guests as if all previous disputes were forgotten.

"Please, come here. Allow me to introduce you. This is Mrs. Lyons, hailing from a distinguished and cultured lineage. Her family boasts several literary magnates and has published numerous books."

"And this is Mrs. Kelly, her family has been pioneers in perfume research and development since the previous century, amassing considerable wealth..."

With a polite smile gracing her features, Loraine greeted each one in turn.

Each person gazed at Loraine with intrigue.

Most of the young ladies were familiar with Loraine's tale, a mix of admiration and envy evident in their eyes.

The wealthy ladies, especially those with eligible sons, showed much enthusiasm. It seemed they were hoping for an impromptu matchmaking session.

They had been well aware of Loraine's reputation for some time, but hesitated to befriend her due to certain reservations. However, with the rapid success of Universe



Group and Loraine's prominent position as its female president and the designated successor of the Torres family, she naturally garnered widespread popularity.

Every affluent family in Vagow wished to forge alliances with the Torres family through marriage.

Terror gripped Loraine.

It was as though she were a rare gem, sought after by these enthusiastic women.

A lady offered her son's business card warmly, suggesting the younger generation should interact more.

Another lady kindly presented Loraine with her son's business card, suggesting that the young individuals should get acquainted and further their mutual understanding.

Not too long ago, these aristocrats would turn up their noses at her and deliberately avoid her.

Understanding the cause of their sudden shift in demeanor, Loraine was tempted to scoff.

No matter how grand and poised these ladies appeared, their self-interest mirrored that of middle-aged women bargaining in a local farmers market.

Observing Loraine being surrounded by others, engaging in social interactions, Florence couldn't help but feel a sense of discontentment.

Her intention was to flaunt her association with Loraine, not to watch others steal the spotlight.

Moreover, she dreamed of Loraine becoming her daughter-in-law. Nobody else should even dare approach Loraine.



Clearing her throat lightly, Florence brushed aside the crowd around Loraine, affectionately held her hands, and said with a smile, "Loraine, I hope these ladies haven't frightened you. Truly, they are all kind-hearted. You and Grady will need their support in the future."

Several ladies exchanged glances, a sense of surprise reflected in their eyes.

Why did Florence's words make it seem like Loraine was already dating her son?

However, the fact that Loraine had agreed to attend the Cruz family's banquet suggested a close connection with Grady.

Everyone present was astute. A moment of thought later, they all laughed in agreement, chiming in with Florence. "Indeed, we'll certainly look out for Loraine and Grady."

Loraine furrowed her brow. She had a gut feeling that Florence's words carried a hidden meaning, something beyond their surface interpretation.

However, Florence had been tactfully ambiguous. It wasn't a situation where Loraine could express irritation.

With grace, Loraine distanced herself from the group. Spotting Grady descending the stairs, she swiftly walked to him.

Grady was dressed in an immaculate white suit. His hair was styled with precision. Seeing Loraine approach, his face lit up with joy.

"Loraine, you look stunning tonight. I hope my attire complements yours."

He gazed at Loraine, his eyes filled with hope that she'd notice his effort.

However, Loraine didn't give him a second glance. She queried, "Grady, your mother was introducing me to various individuals. What does that mean?"

A trace of melancholy flashed across his eyes. Grady clarified, "My mother was probably trying to familiarize you with everyone. She genuinely wants to make amends this time."

On the other side, Florence, seeing the two engaged in conversation, smiled contentedly. She didn't interrupt them and even held back the other ladies, ensuring the two had their space.

Grady's attention was solely on Loraine. As he pondered how to strike a conversation smoothly, a sweet voice abruptly broke in from behind.

"Are you Loraine Torres? Why are you being so impudent? Did you come to the party with the intention of stealing someone's partner?"



✓ You have unlocked exclusive limited-time benefits>>

GO NOW



## Chapter 420 Appreciation

The moment the voice echoed, a hush fell over everyone present.

Grady, taken aback, paused before exclaiming, "Kassidy, what on earth are you talking about?"

Loraine's gaze landed at the person who spoke.

The female was around Grady's age, though the heavy makeup she wore veiled her youthful complexion.

She was adorned in an outfit identical in brand and hue to Grady's.

Could it be a couple's outfit?

Loraine's mind filled with bewilderment as Kassidy approached Grady, intertwining their arms affectionately. With an entitled air, Kassidy uttered, "Grady, why didn't you wait for me?"

Grady, who had been sheltered by his mother since childhood, found himself at a loss as he confronted this unexpected display of intimacy. He remained frozen, unable to respond.

He had never encountered a girl as audacious as Kassidy.

Kassidy cocked her head high, boasting to the onlookers as she introduced herself.

"Hello, everyone. Grady and I have been friends since



The insinuation in her words hinted that she was Grady's future wife.

Whispers rippled through the crowd as they threw pointed glances at Loraine.

It appeared that Kassidy and Grady had a history and were quite close, while Loraine was a more recent acquaintance of Grady's.

Kassidy reveled in the crowd's reaction.

Amidst the bustling conversations of the crowd, a spark ignited within Grady, snapping him back to his senses. With newfound clarity, he shook off Kassidy's hands and turned to Loraine with an anxious expression, eager to offer an explanation.

"Loraine, she's just a distant relative. We haven't met before. I swear, there's nothing between us!"

Loraine responded with a nod, an awkward grin playing on her face as she touched her nose, "Truthfully, you don't need to justify anything to me..."

She truly didn't mind.

Flustered, Kassidy spun around, tears brimming in her eyes as she turned to Florence. "Auntie, did you see how Grady just treated me?"

Florence looked perturbed. She hadn't anticipated that Kassidy would cause such a scene in public. Yet, given that Kassidy was family, Florence stepped in to mediate, all in the name of saving face.



"Alright, that's enough. Grady, it's Cassidy's first time at such an event. Please be lenient with her."

Ignoring Florence, Grady directed his apology to Loraine. "Let me take you to the exhibit inside."

Feeling the weight of everyone's stare, Loraine was eager to escape the banquet hall and nodded in approval immediately.

"Grady, why can't I accompany you too?" Cassidy stood defiantly in front of Grady, unwilling to back down. "Come on, she's just a regular rich girl. Does she really understand the art on display?"

Loraine smiled upon hearing Cassidy's words.

She had always been mocked in the past for her rural background, with people assuming she couldn't comprehend art. But this was the first time someone claimed she was from a wealthy family and still couldn't appreciate the exhibition.

Before Loraine could respond, Grady quickly defended her, his voice filled with conviction.

"Loraine's uncle is the world-renowned artist, Mr. T! He taught her everything about art. How could she not understand?"

Cassidy was momentarily stunned upon hearing the mention of Mr. T, but she didn't let it deter her. In fact, it only fueled her arrogance.

"Sure, her uncle may be influential, but that doesn't automatically make her knowledgeable. This exhibition is far from ordinary." Cassidy locked eyes with Loraine,





defiance in her gaze. "So, Loraine, are you truly talented? I've prepared an exhibit. Can you appreciate it?"

Loraine narrowed her eyes, contemplating her response.

At the exhibition, guests had the option to bring a piece of art or a collection of antiques. While it wasn't a strict rule, it was customary for invited guests to contribute one or two items for display.

Out of courtesy, Loraine had also brought a precious item gifted to her by Wesley.

Clearly, Cassidy was confident in the item she brought, challenging Loraine with her words. "Do you dare to appreciate it?"

Kassidy had come here with the intention of marrying Grady. Her family was wealthy, but their business had no connection to Vagow.

This visit served as an opportunity for her family to explore the market in this area, which is why they wanted her to get close to the Cruz family. The Cruz family in Zodiac was a big clan. This circumstance created a heightened urgency for Cassidy to marry Grady, solidifying their connection even further.

To earn Florence's admiration, her family invested a fortune and bestowed upon her a precious family treasure.

Despite her hopes of capturing the interest of both Grady and Florence, Grady remained apathetic towards her, while Florence's clear enthusiasm was directed towards Loraine instead.

The attention Loraine received at the banquet triggered a sense of urgency within Cassidy.



Suppressing Loraine was necessary if she wanted Florence to see her as the suitable wife for Grady.

Kassidy shot a fierce glare at Loraine.

Despite being provoked, Loraine responded with a smile. She calmly replied, "Certainly. I'd love to see what rare treasure you've brought."



## Chapter 421 A Brooch

Kassidy let out a derisive snort directed at Loraine, instructing the servant to bring forth a delicate jewelry box. With careful precision, she opened it and revealed its contents.

A crowd swarmed around, intrigued by the sight.

Laying before them was an astonishingly refined brooch.

The enormous sapphire at the center was encircled by twelve dazzling diamonds. The golden base exuded elegance and nobility, while the rare three-dimensional crescent moon shape added a unique and captivating beauty. The brooch sparkled brightly, its surface pristine and flawless.

With a lifted chin, Kassidy turned to Loraine. "Feast your eyes on this priceless piece. You may be affluent, but such a treasure is a rare sight."

To those unfamiliar with jewelry, it would appear as if the brooch was a recently crafted piece, brand new and freshly designed.

Loraine, though, refrained from touching the brooch. After a careful examination, she voiced her judgment. "Victorian era antique, isn't it?"

Expecting Loraine to embarrass herself, Kassidy was caught off guard by her comment.

She hadn't predicted Loraine's insightful observation. Spot

on, first try!

Despite her initial reluctance, she was left with no choice but to admit, "Yes!"

Perhaps Loraine merely got lucky with her guess.

Kassidy sought solace within herself and proudly showcased her brooch to everyone around, basking in the attention it garnered.

"This is a unique piece made for Queen Victoria, named the Blue Moon. When the prince presented the Blue Moon to the queen, she donned this very brooch on her wedding day..."

Kassidy's recounting stirred envy in the crowd. Someone curiously inquired, "Did Queen Victoria truly wear this piece?"

Arrogantly, Kassidy confirmed with a nod, "Indeed!"

Loraine initially nodded along with Kassidy's narration. However, upon hearing the claim, Loraine couldn't help but furrow her brows.

"Though the brooch is a masterpiece, it certainly isn't Queen Victoria's Blue Moon," she asserted.

Her statement ignited a sudden tumult among the crowd, who looked at Kassidy with strange expressions.

Nothing was more shameful for an antique collector than passing off a counterfeit as authentic!

Kassidy's expression shifted abruptly. In a fit of anger, she shot back, "How dare you doubt our family's treasure?"

Loraine shook her head and assumed a serious demeanor as she proceeded to provide an explanation.

"The Blue Moon you speak of is specifically stated in the Queen's will as an inheritance piece. In other words, only the royal successor can possess it. It isn't available in the public domain. To my knowledge, the Blue Moon has never gone missing."

Taken aback, Cassidy found herself speechless. The royal family's heirloom was undoubtedly genuine. Did that mean hers was a fraud?

She wouldn't stand for it. With a stamp of her foot, she exploded, "Rubbish! You're envious of my family's invaluable heirloom and are purposefully trying to devalue it!"

Florence interjected, "I vouch for the veracity of Loraine's words. The Cruz family does indeed share ties with Eplistan's royal bloodline. And yes, the Blue Moon is their ancestral heirloom, preserved and unshared for generations."

Certain individuals among the audience were aware of the power of the Cruz family in Zodiac, lending credibility to Florence's proclamation.

Kassidy, however, found herself in no position to rebut Florence. Her complexion turned a deeper shade as a wave of humiliation washed over her.

Even though the reason behind Cassidy's antagonistic behavior was unclear to Loraine, she valued the treasure and felt compelled to assist her.

"The queen wearing this brooch is likely a myth, spun by a jeweler to inflate its value. Nonetheless, the intricate craftsmanship and material rarity do warrant a significant worth."

But Cassidy didn't like what Loraine said one bit. She thought Loraine was making fun of her, and it only made her angrier. She blurted out, "Loraine, if you're such an expert, what have you prepared?"

Eyes turned toward Loraine in anticipation.

Loraine emitted a soft laugh. She regarded Cassidy's weak attempts to provoke her as childish bluster, bearing no real menace.

Before all eyes, she casually unveiled the gift box she had brought along.

As the box lid lifted, the hall echoed with collective gasps.

Inside lay a breathtakingly beautiful crown!

Adorned with rubies and diamonds, each jewel as large as a pigeon's egg, the crown glistened under the light.

Its dazzling splendor could nearly cause a person to squint.

No matter how intricately designed or attention-grabbing the brooch was, it paled before the majesty of the crown.

Nobody could peel their eyes away. A voice from the crowd murmured, "This crown's lineage must be illustrious. Was it worn by any of the royalty?"

Florence's eyes widened in astonishment. "This is Queen Victoria's crown!"

Cassidy, unable to digest this reality, protested, "A brooch couldn't have been lost to the world. How did Loraine end up with the crown? It has to be counterfeit!"

Loraine cast a dismissive look her way and scoffed, "With

your vast understanding of fine things, shouldn't you be able to identify the style of a royal crown? This crown is not an official regalia, but a fashionable accessory for the queen to wear at banquets."

Murmurs resonated among the spectators. "How could Cassidy lack such basic knowledge?"

"It seems her family isn't as powerful as the Cruz family."

"Kassidy, although wealthy, falls short in comparison to Loraine."

"Don't say that. Her family isn't that influential. How could they possibly match the Torres family? She's merely a distant relative of Mrs. Cruz. Her family's glory days are long gone. Now, they can only rely on the goodwill of the Cruz family to maintain their status."

These biting remarks sent a ripple of sneers in Cassidy's direction, causing her to seethe in silent fury.

