

Chapter 576 Marina's Seduction

Marina strongly believed that the plan was flawlessly conceived. Everything was in place. The only thing left was the final step: how to obtain Marco's hair.

This was quite a dilemma for Marina. Marco no longer resided at home, and given the current situation, it seemed nearly impossible to get in touch with him. As a result, she was at a loss on how a strand of his hair could be obtained.

She brainstormed on the matter with Laura, and after a while, a thought occurred to her and she expressed it immediately. "We can try to bribe someone close to Marco. After all, all we need for the paternity test is a single strand of hair."

With that, she grabbed her phone to contact someone. But there was a little problem.

Who would they contact? When it came to the number of people that were close to Marco, they could barely count them on the fingers of one hand.

Finally, after careful consideration, Laura singled out her target. "The person closest to Marco seems to be his assistant, Carl Dixon. I don't remember him having much of a background, so he might be our best entry point," she reasoned.

Now that their sights were set on how to win over Carl, the two of them began to strategize. But even though Carl lacked an impressive background, he had been with Marco for a very long time, so simple incentives would be unlikely to sway him.

Yet, Marina felt differently. "Mom, I think no matter how loyal he is, he's still just an assistant. He'll only ever be an assistant, receiving a meager salary, if he continues to follow Marco all his life. So, how can he genuinely give his all for Marco? Don't worry. I'll talk to him in person. I'll use persuasion and coercion, making it impossible for him to resist me."

Laura felt very proud of Marina and nodded approvingly. "I trust you, my dear. You're from the prestigious Bryant family. And you're also beautiful. With just a little bit of attention from you, any man you have your sights on will undoubtedly fall for you."

They exchanged a smile, and Marina quickly went to task. Without wasting time, she contacted Carl.

As Marco's assistant, Carl was also responsible for handling external affairs, so he had dealt with Marina before. As a result, she was in possession of his contact information.

She sent him a private message: "Mr. Dixon, it's Marina. I know I caused you trouble during today's shareholders' meeting. I apologize for that."

She had begun by identifying herself and attempting to "develop a connection" by casually striking up a conversation.

"I didn't mean to do it on purpose," she continued, "but you know, I was supposed to be the pampered heiress of the Bryant family. Now, my life is in shambles, and I feel so heartbroken and angry."

She made sure to read what she had written, and she couldn't help but feel that it made her appear vulnerable and appealing, making it difficult for any man to resist the urge to comfort her.

Half an hour passed, but there was still no reply from Carl.

Marina became furious, but she continued to pretend that she was weak and vulnerable.

"You know, Mr. Dixon, I often see you by my brother's side. You're so talented and capable. Yet, you've spent so many years following someone like my brother. It must be tough. His temper has always been terrible, and in my opinion, he's just fortunate to be born into the Bryant family. Compared to you, he's far from being impressive. Are you really willing to live your whole life working as a CEO's assistant? That's just a waste of your potential. By now, you should know about Marco's origin. Sooner or later, Bryant Group will be under my control. If you help me now, I promise you'll become a prominent figure in the group. Your power and influence will surpass everyone else's."

Meanwhile, at Bryant Group, Carl glanced at the messages popping up on his phone.

He saw that they were from Marina. The chat had started with coquettish gestures, followed by threats and enticements. In fact, he was stunned by her audacity.

But he had a girlfriend, and their relationship was so strong that they were planning to get married. So, he had no inclination to be attracted to Marina. Moreover, he was satisfied and content with his current job.

Still, he found it shocking that Marina was not only trying to seduce him, but also goading him into betraying Marco.

As far as Carl was concerned, Marco was the person he most admired in his life. Had it not been for Marco's discerning judgment in appointing him as his assistant, he would not have reached his present position. How on earth could he betray Marco?



He contemplated for a while, but at the end, he decided not to delete Marina's number from his contacts.

The whole thing was quite coincidental though. Marco had just asked him to investigate Marina and keep an eye on her recent activities, and now, she had approached him on her own!

Carl smiled to himself and rubbed his hands in glee. This was a wonderful opportunity! He waited for about fifteen minutes before replying her messages.

"Apologies, Miss Bryant. I've been busy. Anyway, I've read your messages and given it some thought. Frankly, you're right. This job is tiring and I'm poorly paid. But what can I do? Opportunities are hard to come by nowadays. Are you sure you'll follow through on your promises? How can I trust that you'll keep your word after I help you? Will you truly promote and reward me?"

Marina, who had been anxiously awaiting his reply, saw Carl's positive response and felt very excited. Without hesitation, she revealed all her intentions and plans to him.

"Don't worry. I already have an ally: Jefferson Foster. It's only a matter of time before we bring Marco down. Mr. Foster was the one who orchestrated the shareholders' meeting, and I'm confident that there will be more chances in the future."

Carl was stunned. He had merely been testing the waters, but Marina had shocked him by spilling all the information he wanted.

Immediately, he forwarded the conversation to Marco.

Marco expressed his disdain for the level of stupidity that Marina had displayed.

But he wasn't surprised by the collusion between her and Jefferson. He had already suspected it after the way Jefferson had behaved during the shareholders' meeting.

"Don't alert your enemies before you've caught them. Pretend to cooperate with her and then devise a plan," Marco instructed Carl.

"Will do," Carl replied and made a mental note to report to Marco later. He intentionally delayed responding to Marina's messages.

Marina became anxious and angry again. How dare this lowly Carl, a mere assistant to the CEO, play hard to get! He really didn't know what was good for him!

But she still believed that all men were greedy and perhaps her seduction had not been enough.

Determined to lure him in, she went all out and sent him a provocative photo of herself.

But just as she was about to send an accompanying voice message to sweet-talk him, Carl's reply popped up: "Alright, I'm in, Miss Bryant. As long as you deliver on your promises! By the way, what exactly do you need me to do?"



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Chapter 577 The Plan

Marina emitted a disdainful snort, a sense of triumph permeating her demeanor. Just as she suspected, men were so predictable. They could hardly resist her allure for more than a few minutes.

Taunting Carl inwardly, Marina typed with a tone both gentle and enticing: "Rest assured, Mr. Dixon, it's relatively simple. I merely require you to procure a strand of my brother's hair."

After a brief contemplation, she appended, "If you perform admirably, I promise you won't be disappointed! I can cater to any desire you may have. Furthermore, as the sole legitimate daughter of the Bryant family, all will be mine eventually. Do you comprehend what I'm implying?"

As Carl perused the overtly suggestive words, he felt a surge of revulsion but restrained himself from deleting the messages, aware that he needed to retain the evidence. Calculatedly, he bided a few more minutes before responding with an undertone of urgency. "Alright! Meet me at the cross-river bridge tomorrow, at three in the afternoon, to retrieve it!"

Upon discerning Carl's reply, Marina couldn't curb her jubilation and immediately rushed to boast to Laura.

"Mom, Marco's assistant is so easy to manipulate. I dealt with him effortlessly!"

Laura, convinced that a mere assistant would be incapable of rejecting such a tantalizing proposition, held no reservations and smiled in approval. "Regardless of anything, Marco is but a mongrel. He's oblivious even to his mother's humble origins.

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What competent individuals can he possibly have around him? My dear Marina, being my daughter, you are naturally astute and capable!"

Basking in the praise, Marina's excitement for the forthcoming meeting amplified.

The following morning, she awoke early and meticulously applied her makeup before setting off to the predetermined rendezvous to meet Carl.

Precisely at three o'clock in the afternoon, Carl arrived punctually. He transferred the strand of hair to Marina, behaving as if he feared recognition. He reminded her to honor their agreement and intended to depart promptly.

With the strand of hair securely in her possession, Marina's spirits soared. She finally examined Carl, the assistant who had perpetually lingered in Marco's shadow.

Carl was indeed attractive. Boasting well-chiseled facial features and a well-proportioned physique, he surpassed many of the heirs of the wealthy families she was acquainted with.

A notion flashed through Marina's mind. She seized Carl's hand, leaning in with a flirtatious gesture. "Mr. Dixon, I appreciate your assistance this time. If you continue to serve me in the future..."

But the instant she approached closer, Carl deftly sidestepped her, his eyes reflecting a hint of terror. He cleared his throat, attempting to regain his composure.

"Miss Bryant, my presence here is only temporary. I'm heavily engaged with work at the company and need to return immediately. If Marco grows suspicious, we risk exposure, which could have catastrophic consequences."



Marina nodded in agreement, completely oblivious to Carl's deception. She hastily implored him to leave.

Subsequently, she retrieved the strand of hair Carl had given her, sealed within a specimen bag, and scrutinized it under the sunlight. The longer she looked, the greater her satisfaction and euphoria grew.

This single strand of hair was the gateway to the lavish lifestyle she and Laura aspired to.

Stealing a glance at the time, Marina sprang into action. She flagged down a taxi and proceeded directly to one of the hospitals under the Bryant family's jurisdiction for a paternity test.

Upon arrival at the hospital, Marina quickly navigated to the laboratory. Her focus was laser-sharp, intent on getting the paternity test conducted as swiftly as possible, entirely ignorant of Loraine, who coincidentally emerged from a nearby office.

As Loraine's gaze landed on a hurried figure, a sense of recognition enveloped her. She took a second glance and confirmed that it was, indeed, Marina.

What could possibly bring Marina to the hospital? And why the rush?

Loraine didn't have the leisure to mull over it as a doctor appeared behind her, bearing a medical report. The doctor offered a smile, saying, "Miss Torres, your grandfather's post-operative status has stabilized, and from now on, he simply needs ample rest."

Relief washed over Loraine. Ever since Aldo was discharged from the hospital, he seemed to be faring well, reminiscent of his



former self. Yet, Loraine knew that Aldo was inherently stoic and might be downplaying any discomfort he experienced. Her concern was incessant.

When she had shared her worries with Marco, he had suggested this hospital for a follow-up examination.

This hospital, part of the Bryant family's holdings, had transitioned into something akin to a private institution, notably famous for its exceptional nursing care.

Initially, Aldo was hesitant to visit a hospital affiliated with the Bryant name. It was only after Loraine's persistent coaxing that he consented to undergo the examination here.

Seeing the report, which showed all parameters within normal limits, with the doctor pointing out minor issues that Aldo had previously overlooked, and with recommendations for lifestyle alterations and care instructions, Loraine finally found solace.

Accepting the report, Loraine conveyed her appreciation to the doctor. As she strolled into the corridor, her thoughts meandered as her gaze strayed to the direction where she had spotted Marina moments earlier.

That direction... wasn't it towards the laboratory?

Just a few days ago, Marina had instigated a significant commotion at the Bryant Group's shareholders' meeting. Marco had detained her and put her under house arrest. Why then was she at the hospital now, and what drew her towards the laboratory?



Chapter 578 Vigilance

Loraine's puzzlement deepened as she remembered Marina strutting without a hint of ailment. Could it be that Laura was the one in actual distress?

Seeing her in a trance and slow to recover, the doctor wore a smile and inquired, "Miss Torres, do you need any more clarification?"

Snapping back to reality, Loraine denied, "No, all clear. By the way, Dr. Coleman, what department is that?"

She gestured towards Marina's path, hoping her memory didn't fail her.

Hayden Coleman followed her gaze and said, "Over there? That's the lab. There's no other department aside from that. How may I assist you further, Miss Torres? I need to grab some documents there."

Loraine's suspicions mounted, yet she remained poker-faced, not betraying any emotions. "It's nothing, thank you, Dr. Coleman."

Bidding Hayden farewell, Loraine made her way out of the hospital. The more she pondered, the more unsettled she became, and finally she dialed Marco's number.

Her unexpected call seemed to catch Marco off guard, his chuckling voice resonated, "Loraine, what leads you to call me?"

Without wasting any time, Loraine cut straight to the chase, "I spotted Marina at the hospital."



There was a brief pause from Marco, but he didn't sound taken aback.

"Marco, something doesn't feel right... Please be cautious around Laura and Marina. Marina didn't seem to be ill, and her visit to the laboratory suggests there's certainly more to it."

The emergence of online gossip had made Loraine hyperaware, and Marina's unexpected hospital visit amplified her suspicion.

Marco, on the other side, wore a smirk.

Marina's whereabouts didn't shock him. He had previously inferred Marina's intentions upon discovering her manipulative plot to acquire his hair.

He was curious to see what other schemes they would concoct.

Yet, Marco decided to withhold further information. Despite appreciating Loraine's concern, he didn't want her worrying over him.

Following a brief silence, Marco responded with his typical tone, "Understood. I'll ensure they're watched. Don't stress over it."

Loraine let out a sigh and murmured her agreement without further words.

Marco, amused, gently teased, "Loraine, if you're so concerned about people insignificant to you, I might get jealous. Why don't you divert your attention towards me instead of worrying about unimportant people?"

Caught off guard by Marco's teasing, Loraine blushed and countered defiantly, "I'm just worried that any issue with you could impact our partnership. It's not that I care about you!"

Yet her feigned indifference couldn't deceive Marco, who



understood her well.

Detecting the subtle shift in Loraine's voice, Marco's grin broadened. He knew she was embarrassed. In a low, alluring tone, he flirted, "Alright. Can I take this beautiful and kind business partner of mine to dinner?"

A wave of warmth swept over Loraine's heart. Their bantering had evolved into a familiar, enjoyable ritual, each providing the other a graceful way out.

This unique dynamic made her feel at ease.

Truth be told, even if Marco hadn't mentioned it, Loraine would have found an excuse to see him as she was worried about him.

But since Marco was the first to bring it up...

Loraine cleared her throat and feigned arrogance. "Let me first check my schedule for tonight."

Unable to keep up the act after a brief pause, she spoke with a hint of uncontrolled excitement. "Alright, my day looks open. I'm not too swamped and could squeeze in dinner with our business associate."

Marco laughed softly, finding Loraine's demeanor utterly charming. "Alright, I'll set it up."

Hanging up, Loraine touched her warm cheek, stifling a smile. She glanced back at the hospital, her brow creasing slightly.

Although Marco assured her he had everything under control, Loraine couldn't shake off her concern. After a moment's hesitation, she texted her assistant.

"Keep tabs on Marina's activities and inform me at once of any suspicious movements."



Once her assistant confirmed her instructions, Loraine pocketed her phone and stared in the direction Marina had disappeared, her gaze laden with worry.

The repeated antics of the Bryant family's mother-daughter duo had eroded Loraine's trust in them. She knew she had to be vigilant, ready to step in if Marina stirred up more trouble. She wished to be by Marco's side, ready to lend a hand if needed.

Meanwhile, at the Bryant Group Hospital, Marina had reached the laboratory department.

She cautiously glanced around before clearing her throat to gain the attention of the doctor at the window. "Who is in charge here? I need some files for a paternity test."

Reech Akinson, the head of the laboratory department, happened to be nearby sorting out some paperwork. Hearing Marina's request, he recognized her immediately.

Reech's face broke into a fawning smile as he hurried over to Marina.

"Miss Bryant, whose records are you after? Our hospital has meticulously maintained the Bryant family's records over the years!" Reech announced eagerly.

He knew that pleasing a member of the Bryant family was an easy ticket to promotion in the hospital. Marina's arrival gave him a golden opportunity, and he was desperate to make the most of it.

Having felt overlooked recently, Marina found Reech's flattery pleasing. She nodded haughtily and confidently extracted a strand of hair from her bag. "Match this hair to Mrs. Bryant's records," she commanded.

Chapter 579 No Blood Relationship

"Mrs. Bryant?" Reech quirked an eyebrow, his gaze landing on Marina quizzically. "Which Mrs. Bryant are you referring to?" He questioned with an undertone of uncertainty.

Impatience knitted Marina's brows together as she retorted, "Which Mrs. Bryant do you think? Cease the unnecessary delay, I'm pressed for time! Can you shoulder the consequences of obstructing my schedule?"

Reech's puzzlement deepened, but Marina's authoritative demeanor made him hesitate to probe further. He nodded, bowing slightly as he accepted the strand of hair from her. Without delay, he addressed another doctor, stating emphatically, "Retrieve Mrs. Bryant's file immediately and conduct a paternity test with this hair sample!"

The young intern doctor, still green and unseasoned, scratched his head in bewilderment and asked, "Are we allowed to just access Mrs. Bryant's file like that?"

Reech cast a warning glance at the intern without uttering a word. He then reverted his attention to Marina, wearing a polite smile. "Please forgive him. He's not fully cognizant. Miss, since you're here in person, we'll surely expedite the process for you."

The intern drooped his head in silent reproof but refrained from uttering a word.

On hearing that, Marina's frown deepened as she prodded, "Then hasten. Mrs. Bryant requires it."



She stressed the identity of Mrs. Bryant deliberately to signal to these doctors that despite she and Laura losing their power, they still belonged to the Bryant family. She was oblivious to the fact that her words bore a deeper implication in their minds.

Reech moved closer to her. He pitched his voice lower, ingratiating himself, "Miss Bryant, I'll ensure someone attends to it promptly! You see, I'm extending a favor today. Could you possibly vouch for me at the Bryant Group in the future, maybe even aiding in advancing my position?"

This was the inaugural instance when someone approached Marina concerning the Bryant Group matters, sparking a sense of pride within her. Post the illegitimate child incident, it appeared as though everyone now perceived her as the true powerhouse of the Bryant Group. Even the residual resentment from the shareholders' meeting with Marco had somewhat evaporated.

Marina maintained her composure and offered a cryptic smile. "Rest assured, Dr. Akinson. With your assistance today, once I reclaim control of the Bryant Group, I will certainly address this matter for you."

Reech's elation soared, and he continued to heap praises on Marina, making her feel as if she were on top of the world.

Concurrently, the other doctors in the laboratory displayed no shock. They continued their tasks, unperturbed by the unfolding events. It was evident that this wasn't Reech's first stint at such behavior.

Utilizing the title of Mrs. Bryant, Marina wielded her clout, and the hospital accorded her respect, giving her case precedence and extending special treatment. Within a few hours, the paternity test results were at hand.



Reech, eager to flaunt his authority in Marina's presence, feigned solemnity as he questioned his subordinate, "Have the results been finalized? What are the findings?"

The intern shifted his gaze between Marina and Reech, confusion evident in his expression. Regardless, he shook his head and responded, "Director, these two individuals do not share a blood relationship."

His demeanor suggested that the outcome was anticipated. Marina's face was a picture of elation. She yanked the test report from the intern's grasp without even perusing it, satisfied with the outcome, and promptly exited the hospital.

Once Marina had departed, the intern was left in utter bewilderment. He mumbled, puzzled, "Director, Mrs. Bryant is significantly advanced in age. Why would she require a paternity test? Is it possible for her to conceive an illegitimate child at this age?"

He was interrupted mid-sentence by a firm slap on his head from Reech.

"Your comprehension is lacking! When it comes to matters of the influential, it's best to keep your nose out!"

Despite sharing similar doubts, Reech refrained from voicing them. To him, the matters of the rich and powerful held little significance compared to the effortless wealth and prestige he enjoyed.

Recalling Marina's surreptitious visit today, Reech opted for extra caution. He summoned the intern closer and murmured, "Avoid circulating rumors about today's events, and, by the way, the cost of this test will be deducted from your salary."

The intern's eyes bulged, his face flaming in indignation.



Nevertheless, he bit his tongue, silently seething as he watched Reech saunter away nonchalantly, hands folded behind his back.

Elsewhere, Marina, jubilant, clutched the test report and prepared to return to the Bryant villa.

Unbeknownst to her, in recent years, due to Laura's lack of authority, the "Mrs. Bryant" within the Bryant family's business holdings was in fact Liza, the elderly Mrs. Bryant!

Upon her return to the Bryant residence, Marina couldn't contain her excitement. Before she even spotted Laura, she exclaimed, "Mom, the test results are out! There's no blood relation. Marco is indeed an illegitimate child!"

Laura quickly shushed Marina, fearful of alerting Liza. She then grabbed the test report from Marina's grip, her smile expanding with sheer delight.


With a combination of caution and anticipation, she broke the seal on the report, seemingly eager to validate the news and soothe her racing heart.

However, as she unfurled the report, Laura froze.

The name inscribed on the document was not hers but belonged to Liza, the elderly Mrs. Bryant.

And beneath it, a particularly prominent line stated, "No blood relationship confirmed!"



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Chapter 580 Not An Illegitimate Child

Laura's eyes widened in shock as she hastily unfolded the entire report, glancing at it over and over in disbelief.

After verifying the information several times, she was certain that she hadn't misread the top name - it was indeed Liza's. Laura's hands trembled with exhilaration, and she broke into unrestrained laughter.

Marina, puzzled and bewildered, couldn't comprehend why Laura suddenly seemed so overjoyed. Just as she was about to ask, Laura handed her the report.

Her voice shaking with thrill, Laura urged, "Marina, read this! Whose name is on it?"

As Marina took the report and read through it, Laura excitedly muttered, "I had always presumed Marco was the illicit child of your father and another woman. But surprise! He's actually an unrelated child to the Bryant family!"

Marina was struck dumb with shock, taking a few moments to digest the revelation. An overwhelming mix of excitement and disbelief took hold of her.

Marco wasn't a Bryant at all!

Unbeknownst to her, she had stumbled upon an even more invaluable piece of information!

Liza might have tolerated and even defended Marco as an





illegitimate child based on the belief that he was still a part of the Bryant lineage.

But once it came to light that Marco had no familial ties to the Bryants, Liza would no longer be able to feign ignorance!

Marina grasped the weight of this revelation. Laura's eyes narrowed with satisfaction, quipping, "That old witch thinks she's invincible, but what good is her power now? She's become an old fool, unknowingly letting an unrelated child control the Bryant family."

Laura pondered deeper. If Marco had no ties to the Bryant family, Marina would be the only rightful heir. Even if Liza held some grievances against them, she would be compelled to back them up to avoid the Bryant family's legacy from falling into the hands of strangers!

Being a stalwart for the Bryant family, Liza would never allow such an incident to transpire.

The revelation kept the two of them excited for a long time. Marina continuously reread the test report, her exhilaration barely containable. She asked, "Mom, what's our next move? Should we expose this, or...?"

Laura hesitated for a moment, remembering past missteps. What if Liza and Marco retaliated against them for this?

But then, she quickly reassessed the situation. Once this information was made public, Marco would be irreparably discredited. Even if Liza remained biased, she could never continue supporting Marco.

Stripped of the Bryant Group and its affluence, Marco would be nothing more than an average individual. What capacity would he have to retaliate against them?



Having weighed her options, Laura brushed off her concerns. Wearing a sly smile, she stated, "We still have those marketing accounts' contact information. With such explosive news, they won't hesitate to spread it!"

People inherently pursued benefits and dodged harm. Previously, owing to Marco's dominance, the industry's marketing accounts had maintained a safe distance from Laura and Marina. But with Marco's downfall in sight, coupled with Laura's persuasive tactics and the compelling evidence, a few influential accounts were swayed and agreed to release the paternity test results.

Soon after, several notable figures published the paternity test results on the internet, igniting a massive uproar. Particularly as this time, those marketing accounts directly revealed Marco's true lineage.

"Marco Bryant isn't a Bryant at all!"

The recent scandal about Marco Bryant being an illegitimate child had experienced numerous twists, leaving netizens bewildered. Even though it was eventually hushed, netizens still remembered it.

To their surprise, a more explosive piece of news surfaced just a few days later.

"Wow, Marco Bryant isn't an illegitimate child after all! He shares no blood ties with the Bryant family?"

"The paternity test results are out, and they seem authentic with official hospital stamps. I'm completely confounded by this entire situation! Is Marco truly not a Bryant?"

"What a spectacle!"

The online community was teeming with discussions, conspiracy theories, and all kinds of speculative comments, much to the chagrin of Marco's dedicated followers.

As a youthful and charming heartthrob, further fueled by the hot gossip surrounding his relationship with Loraine, Marco had amassed a sizable fanbase. His ardent followers sincerely attempted to urge others to stay rational and withhold judgment until an official statement was released. However, their efforts appeared insignificant amidst the tidal wave of discussions.

Marco's lineage became the focal point, inciting a frenzied clamor online. Even the Bryant Group's PR team's efforts to control the situation were in vain, as it seemed that someone was deliberately stoking the controversy from behind the scenes.

Upon receiving the news, Carl immediately brought it to Marco's notice. "Mr. Bryant, should we take prompt action to suppress this news?"

Marco responded with an icy smirk, neither affirming nor refuting anything.

"I knew that Marina was after your hair, so I suspected they might meddle with the DNA test," Carl defended Marco indignantly, "but I never expected they would go to the extent of fabricating rumors that you're not a true Bryant! It's outrageous!"

Frowning, Marco responded, "There's no need to address it now. Let them stir the pot. It'll save me the hassle of handling them."

After all, once the situation spiraled, Liza wouldn't let Laura and Marina off the hook.

