

Chapter 643 Devil Sister

Swiftly, a cluster of small children surrounded Loraine, their eyes sparkling with anticipation at the candies in her hand. Their tears had ceased, replaced by an eagerness for her questions.

Loraine cleared her throat and presented a candy, smiling as she inquired, "Who visited the orphanage today? Did they upset you?"

Giovanni was the first to shoot his hand up, voicing his indignation, "Yes, it was the Devil Sister! The Devil Sister is really mean as she constantly sends people to pick on us!"

Loraine hesitated at his response. He had answered, but not clarified who the Devil Sister was. She needed to know who was tormenting them.

Regardless, Loraine didn't wish to retract her promise, so she handed the candy to Giovanni.

Giovanni grinned ecstatically, revealing a set of jagged teeth. He was evidently a sugar fiend, and Loraine suddenly felt a pang of guilt. If Eloise found out that she had been feeding candies to this little candy lover, there might be trouble.

However, Giovanni wasn't merely a candy lover. He was also magnanimous. He took the remaining candies and generously shared them with the other kids, one by one.

In the corner sat a quiet and reserved boy who didn't engage in the other children's activities or ask for candy. However, Loraine noticed that he was one of the children who had



returned with Giovanni. His eyes were slightly reddened, but he held back his tears with stubborn determination.

Giovanni made sure to distribute to everyone, and when he was finished, he handed most of the remaining candy to the reserved boy.

"Try the candy Angel Sister gave us!"

The boy raised his head, and upon seeing Loraine, he hesitated momentarily before making his way towards her, surprised. "Lorrie?"

He was lean with a dusky complexion, around fifteen or sixteen years old, which made him one of the older children at the orphanage. As Loraine observed him, memories flooded in.

Back when Loraine was still at the orphanage, she used to look after him. Back then, he was just a feeble little boy. When she was found by the Torres family, he had chased after her for miles, tearfully pleading her not to forget about the orphanage.

The image of the little boy from her memories blended with the frail face before her, causing Loraine's heart to quiver. She approached him and smiled, gently tousling his hair.

"Dillon? Why are you still so skinny? If word gets out, people might think that Mrs. Harvey is neglecting you and your meals," Loraine expressed with concern.

Dillon Bernard scratched his head, looking somewhat embarrassed. Many of his peers had been adopted or had found their own way and had left the orphanage. However, due to his inherent health condition, Dillon remained at the orphanage, burdened with guilt over Eloise. Over time, he became more introverted and secluded.

Yet, the sight of Loraine now appeared to unlock a long-closed



door in his heart, infusing him with a renewed vivacity and cheerfulness.

With a familiar face in their midst, Loraine knew she could extract information more readily. She distributed the candies once more and smiled, probing, "Can you tell me now who this Devil Sister is?"

Dillon furrowed his brows, a visible expression of disdain contorting his face.

"The Devil Sister is Judie Cooper. After you left, she began spreading false tales and slandering you throughout the village," Dillon continued, his voice resonating with indignation, "We couldn't stand by silently and attempted to counter her claims, stating the truth in the village... but she used her family's wealth to retaliate against us. She tormented and even physically assaulted us. And even now, she continues to disrupt the peace at the orphanage!"

Upon hearing this, Loraine's expression darkened. "No wonder she's been dubbed the Devil."

Dillon glanced at Loraine, a tinge of shyness coloring his features, and nodded, "Lorrie, you were always benevolent towards us. Mrs. Harvey constantly reminded us of your kindness, and every child in the orphanage recognizes you. That's why we refer to you as Angel Sister. As for that pesky, disgusting Judie, she's nothing less than the Devil!"

The other children all nodded in solidarity, echoing Dillon's sentiments. Loraine was touched by the title of Angel Sister, but her mood soured upon learning how Judie didn't merely taunt them but also inflicted physical harm.

Initially, Loraine assumed that Judie's harassment was confined to her alone, but it appeared she had no reservations about inflicting misery upon the other orphanage children. And

she even shamelessly pestered Eloise.

A surge of anger coursed through Loraine at the thought of Judie tormenting the already aged Eloise.

However, she swiftly regained her composure before the innocent children, masking her ire, and smiled, affirming, "Since you all refer to me as Angel Sister, I will certainly stand up for you."

Originally, Loraine intended to confront Judie after visiting Eloise. She planned to caution her to cease spreading falsehoods and creating havoc. However, it seemed that Judie was an active instigator of trouble. And now she was coming to her.

So Loraine decided to settle the score with her once and for all.


Meanwhile, at the entrance of the orphanage.

Upon Marco's arrival, he witnessed two men in black manhandling Eloise.

The fragile woman couldn't resist their brutish tugging and was laboring to maintain her balance.

Observing this, Marco's eyes narrowed in fury as he advanced and bellowed, "Stop!"



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Chapter 644 Fear

As Marco's chilly voice reverberated, the group of black-clad individuals who had been hassling Eloise suddenly froze, directing their attention towards him.

In comparison to Marco's usual professional bodyguards, these individuals seemed far less formidable, almost like ordinary people who lacked any significance in Marco's eyes.

These individuals warily studied Marco, casting speculative glances at him.

His appearance was unremarkable that day, apart from his height and attractive features, nothing suggested that he was someone of importance.

The man in sunglasses, who seemed to lead this group, finally relaxed, his laughter filled with scorn echoing in the air. "And who might you be? Do you have any idea who we are? You're interfering in our business, huh?"

He signaled with his hand, and his black-clad men swiftly encircled Marco, adopting threatening postures to bully him into submission.

Eloise gave Marco an anxious look. "This isn't your fight. Don't get involved in this."

"Find somewhere safe to go, Mrs. Harvey. I'll handle this," Marco advised in a calm and confident voice, easing her worries. Eloise retreated.

"You're stepping out of line! We're not people you can trifle with!"



The man arrogantly jutted his chin at Marco. "If you kneel down, call me 'daddy', and apologize, I might consider sparing you..."

Before he could complete his sentence, a sudden gust disturbed the tense atmosphere. The man didn't see Marco's move, but he felt a swift hit on his face. He would have toppled over had it not been for his men, who quickly steadied him.

His sunglasses were now askew, awkwardly hanging from his nose.

Feeling humiliated before his subordinates, the man angrily wiped his face. "This brat dares to ambush me! Boys, teach him a lesson! Beat this son of a bitch!"

On his command, the gang of black-clad men charged forward with loud roars. Yet, Marco merely scoffed in derision, easily snagging one of their wrists and delivering a hard twist. With a swift movement of his leg, he sent the man crashing to the ground.

Pained cries filled the air.

Marco, however, remained cool, appearing as if he had merely been doing a light warm-up. Not a bead of sweat was in sight.

The man in sunglasses understood now that he had met his match. Swallowing nervously, he questioned, "Who are you? Why are you messing with our business? Have you heard of the Cooper family? They're big shots around here! Picking a fight with them won't turn out well for you!"

He hoped that dropping the Cooper family's name would instill fear in Marco.

But Marco's expression only became more frosty. "The Cooper family? Huh, you bunch don't even deserve to know my name."

The man bristled with fury, teeth gritted. "Attack, all of you! Corner him, wear him down!"

But having been floored once already, his men weren't eager to rush forward again. On the verge of an explosive outburst, the man was approached by one of his underlings, his expression stricken with fear.

He whispered hurriedly, "Boss, there's something familiar about that handsome guy... I think I saw him in a newspaper a few years ago when I was in the city."

The pupils of the man were constricted. In the antiquated mindset of the locals, appearing in the newspapers was the mark of a powerful and potentially influential person. He was someone he couldn't afford to provoke.

Unsettled, he inquired in a low voice, "Who is he?"

"It's... it's like... I think he's the CEO of Bryant Group? I saw it many years ago. Boss, it seems we might have messed with the wrong man!"

The man felt his eyelids twitch. He didn't have to be a genius to know that they couldn't afford to mess with a CEO. Even the small-town Cooper family held sway over them, let alone a CEO with a newspaper profile.

They were but lackeys of the Cooper family. To upset such a powerful person to satisfy the Coopers would only lead to hardship and trouble for them. The man had already formulated a plan of retreat. Stepping back discreetly, he made a final threat.

"We'll let it slide this time. But old woman, don't think you're untouchable with your backer. Mark my words, when I report this to the Cooper family, they won't leave this land be!"



With that, he swiftly turned and sprinted off, creating a significant gap in seconds.

The remaining henchmen, their courage evaporated, hastily dispersed, leaving the area deserted in a blink.

Marco's brows knitted together, but he chose not to pursue, considering Eloise's safety.

"Are you alright, Mrs. Harvey?"

Eloise took a moment to compose herself, shook her head to signal she was unharmed, and expressed her gratitude, "Thank you, Marco. Truly."

Helping Eloise to a nearby bench, Marco asked softly, "What was that about?"

Eloise paused, sighed, and began to explain. "That girl, Judie Cooper. She wants to purchase the orphanage land for a farmhouse. I initially resisted, but the Coopers argued it was for the community's benefit. Besides, I'm not getting any younger, so I told Judie I'd consider it if she helped find a suitable place for the children of the orphanage."

Marco's instincts told him it wasn't as simple as that.

Eloise continued, "But Judie didn't want to spend a dime for the children. After several rounds of negotiation, I realized they were all overbearing and selfish! She began causing trouble here because I didn't agree. It's been escalating lately. I tried appealing to the village head, but to no avail. It's appalling."

Marco's disdain for Judie grew as he listened.

He asked in a subdued voice, "Why haven't you reached out to the Torres family? If Loraine knew about this, she would

Chapter 644 Fear

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certainly help settle the issue."



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Chapter 645 Visiting The Cooper Family

Marco discovered through Loraine that the Torres family had consistently maintained contact with Eloise. Special delegates were sent to distribute grants annually.

If Eloise raised an issue, the Torres family would certainly act, and given their resources, they would likely solve it thoroughly.

However, neither the Torres family nor Loraine were aware of the hardship the orphanage was facing, indicating that Eloise had opted not to disclose this information.

Eloise let out a sigh but didn't say anything.

Aware of Eloise's significance to Loraine, Marco paid close attention to her. He queried, "Why didn't you say something? Are you facing any difficulties?"

Eloise was taken aback at Marco's question, not expecting his perceptiveness. His understanding made her even more glad that Loraine had found such a considerate man.

"I... I didn't want to involve Lorrie in any trouble," Eloise finally confessed. "When the Torres family took Lorrie away abruptly, the villagers were left with a distorted version of events. The Coopers, seeing the Torres family's luxurious car, fabricated a story that Lorrie was taken in by a wealthy man. Public opinion has a way of distorting the truth. As an ordinary person, my words hold little weight, and my explanation fell on deaf ears. As a result, Lorrie has been misunderstood for many years."

Marco listened to her patiently as she continued, "Lorrie was returning to a comfortable life with the Torres family. The petty jealousy of the villagers could not harm her there. As long as she was away from them, she would soon forget those malevolent characters. Therefore, I chose not to contact Lorrie, sparing her any further association with these individuals."

Eloise always had Loraine's best interests at heart, and she was correct. The Torres family could solve this local issue with ease. However, Eloise feared that if the Coopers learned of Loraine's true identity, their gossip could harm the reputation of the Torres family in the city.

It was better to let the rumors stay confined to this isolated and backward village.

Marco comprehended Eloise's reasoning, and remained silent. He and Loraine knew all too well the destructive power of rumors.

Although they were previously unaware of Judie's torment of the orphanage, now that they knew, they wouldn't allow Eloise to suffer further.

As Marco was about to speak, he heard Loraine's voice behind him.

"Mrs. Harvey, Marco, where are those troublemakers?"

At the sound of Loraine's voice, Eloise immediately ceased speaking. She turned to look at Loraine, feigning a reprimanding tone, "Lorrie, didn't I tell you to stay in the room and look after the children? Why did you leave?"

"I was worried about you. You've been gone for so long." Seeing that both Eloise and Marco were safe, Loraine let out a sigh of relief. Smiling, she held Eloise's hand.



However, Loraine soon noticed that Eloise's clothes were speckled with dust and she was slightly trembling as she walked. Observing the signs of a scuffle on the ground, Loraine pieced things together, but remained silent. She didn't mention her knowledge about Judie, simply offering Eloise her support.

"I'll take you back to your room to rest."

Eloise, not wishing to worry Loraine, reassured her, "I'm fine. I'm just not as strong as I used to be, but I'm not injured."

Loraine bit her lip and insisted on helping Eloise back to her room. After ensuring Eloise was resting, she came out and asked Marco, "What happened earlier?"

Marco didn't wish to keep her in the dark, so he relayed the entire incident. Recalling the children's complaints, Loraine's anger towards the maliciousness of the Cooper family was ignited. "Judie has crossed a line. She's overtly exploiting the orphanage and even tormenting the children there. She's a vile woman!"

Despite knowing Judie's propensity to intimidate the weak and fear the strong, Loraine was still incensed.

The orphanage only housed vulnerable Eloise and the children. How could Judie muster the audacity to bring a group of sturdy bodyguards to cause havoc?

Marco gently patted Loraine's back, offering silent comfort. Loraine collected herself, looking up at Marco again. As their eyes met, Marco could see that she had calmed significantly.

"I can't ignore Judie's attempts to seize control of the orphanage. Even setting aside my personal grudge against her, I want to pay the Cooper family a visit."

It seemed as though all the trouble stemmed from the Coopers. If Eloise was hesitant about leaving the village with her, Loraine had to resolve this issue for the orphanage to continue its operations peacefully.

"Alright, I support your decision." Standing beside Loraine, Marco provided steady support.

It wasn't difficult to locate Judie's house in the village. Armed with the earlier directions from Lillie, they easily found the grand villa of the Cooper family.

Standing in front of the towering, lavish house, they instantly understood why Lillie was subservient to Judie. Living in such an opulent house in a remote village indicated the Coopers were likely the wealthiest family around.

Loraine narrowed her eyes, recollecting that Eloise had once told her that the Cooper family hadn't always been this affluent, and no family members had ventured out to do business. Their wealth seemed to have multiplied overnight, the source of which remained a mystery to the villagers.

Regardless, Loraine wasn't interested in solving this riddle. She was simply determined that it was time to settle matters with Judie.



Chapter 646 Eavesdropping

Loraine had regained her composure and was about to proceed towards the Coopers' house when she noticed a car pulling up at their gate. One by one, a group of bodyguards dressed in black exited the car, scanning their surroundings vigilantly.

Just as they were about to spot Loraine, Marco abruptly pulled her aside into hiding.

They squeezed into a narrow alley between the house and the adjacent garden. Marco's only thought was to take cover, temporarily overlooking other details. He soon realized that something soft was pressed against his body.

Loraine's eyelashes fluttered slightly due to surprise, her chest rising and falling with her breaths. She stared at the men in black, oblivious to her present circumstances.

In this confined space, she had to stand on her toes to hide alongside Marco. Consequently, her head now aligned with his cheek.

Her quick and nervous breaths warmed Marco's face.

Marco's eyes darkened. His hands, which had been gripping her arms, shifted silently to encircle her waist.

Marco's gaze fixed on her parted lips. He was aware of the fact that if he lowered his head, he might be able to steal a kiss from her.

Recognizing the desire in Marco's eyes, Loraine froze. It then dawned on her what their position implied. Her face turned a



deep shade of red as she hastily attempted to free herself from his grasp.

Marco let out a muffled groan, effortlessly restraining her with his large, firm hand. Controlling his breathing, he whispered into her ear, "Don't move. If you keep squirming, I won't be able to resist."

Understanding his implication, Loraine's face turned an even deeper shade of red, but she now remained still.

With her securely in his arms, Marco murmured, "This group caused trouble at the orphanage today. I don't know what they were up to after leaving, but they've returned to the Cooper family. Let's stay quiet and try to overhear their conversation."

Loraine offered a slight nod. Her serious expression further fueled Marco's desire.

A noise from the gate drew their attention.

The door of the Coopers' house opened, and a woman, roughly Loraine's age, emerged.

The woman, donned in designer clothes, held herself arrogantly. Unlike the pampered, wealthy ladies like Marina, she possessed the air of a street-savvy girl.

As soon as she stepped out, she jabbed her finger at the lead man, who was wearing sunglasses, berating him, "Incompetent! You couldn't even handle an old woman. My family is wasting our money on you!"

Watching the brazen woman, Loraine frowned and murmured, "That woman is Judie..."

The man in sunglasses meekly mumbled a response. Seeing the marks on his face, Loraine was reminded of the signs of a



brawl at the orphanage gate. She inferred that it must have been this group involved in the conflict there.

Anxious, Loraine couldn't help but query, "Marco, did they target Mrs. Harvey at the orphanage?"

They were merely a wall away from the group. Marco promptly placed a finger over her lips, soothing her in a soft voice, "I was there when it happened. Mrs. Harvey is safe. Don't worry."

Comforted by his reassurance, Loraine quietly nodded.

Looking down at her, Marco felt a tender affection. His lips curled up into a faint smile. Whispering into her ear, he said, "I fought them off. I didn't let them lay a finger on Mrs. Harvey."

Their proximity was intimate. As he whispered, his warm breath enveloped her ear.

It felt as if his words were nibbling at her earlobe.

Loraine stiffened, her body tensing in response. Unaware of her reaction, Marco continued his reassurances, "Judie's minions returned defeated this time. She might have failed this time, but she won't likely give up... We can gather information here and prepare for their next move."

Loraine was somewhat dazed. Her posture had her leaning closely against Marco. His warm body stirred her thoughts.

When she didn't respond, Marco felt a hint of curiosity. However, his arms around her waist informed him of Loraine's rigid state. Chuckling softly, he turned his head. His lips brushed against Loraine's ear as he murmured teasingly.

"Why so silent? Afraid you'll make a noise if you open your mouth? Should I keep it covered with mine?"

Caught under Marco's playful gaze, Loraine's ears flushed a deep pink, which seemed endearing.

An indignant Loraine glared at him, about to retort, "You—"

But Marco quickly turned serious again, placing a finger on her lips. "Hush, they're starting to talk."

He must have done it intentionally!

While Loraine was irked, she couldn't afford to lose her temper at the moment. So she remained in her position, eavesdropping.


The man said with a look of frustration as he tried to defend himself, "Miss, it's not our fault. That old woman somehow found a protector, a man who is skilled in combat. That's why we couldn't succeed."

Judie raised an eyebrow, sneering, "All of you couldn't overpower one man? You dare to use that as an excuse? Pathetic!"

The man appeared chagrined. Judie scoffed and assumed a haughty tone.

"Never mind. I won't blame you this time. Go to the village head now and inform him that the Cooper family will host a banquet and invite the villagers tomorrow." Judie paused briefly before adding menacingly, "Convince the village head to bring the old woman from the orphanage to the banquet by any means!"



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Chapter 647 Seizing The Opportunity

After Judie finished giving her instructions, the group of men dressed in all black nodded and bowed, and then drove away.

Judie returned to the villa, unaware that two eavesdroppers lurked in the shadows.

As Judie's figure disappeared, Loraine and Marco emerged from the darkness, their expressions far from pleased.

Loraine remarked indignantly, "Judie is up to something. She definitely didn't invite Mrs. Harvey to the banquet without a hidden agenda!"

Given the Cooper family's reputation for being stingy and ungenerous, it seemed highly suspicious for them to invite the villagers. Their penny-pinching nature made it clear that they had ulterior motives.

Marco remained silent, his gaze fixed on the firmly closed gates of the Cooper family villa. He held Loraine's hand and said, "Fortunately, we now know their plans and can take the initiative. Let's go back to Mrs. Harvey and tell her to prepare in advance. Whatever they have in mind, we'll be ready with a response."

As his hand held Loraine's, she couldn't help but recall all the tense moments they had shared just now. Her face turned slightly red, but she did not pull away from his grasp.

"Well... Let's head back to the orphanage first! Mrs. Harvey had



a fright today, and it's not ideal for us to stay out too long."

The two walked hand in hand all the way back, seemingly closer than they were when they first arrived in the rustic countryside.

By the time they returned to the orphanage, it was already late in the evening.

All the children had settled in their rooms to sleep, and Eloise had also retired to her room, having experienced quite a shock that day. The lights in her room were off, but the room that had been prepared for Loraine and Marco remained illuminated.

Loraine stood in front of Eloise's door, hesitating to knock, and eventually, she withdrew her hand.

With a sigh, she turned around to leave.

Marco followed her, feeling puzzled. "What's wrong? Shouldn't we remind Mrs. Harvey not to attend the Cooper family's banquet tomorrow?"

"Mrs. Harvey has always been a light sleeper. If I wake her up now, she probably won't be able to sleep well throughout the rest of the night. Let's tell her tomorrow," Loraine replied.

In addition to that, Eloise was getting older, and her health wasn't as good as it once was. Loraine didn't want to disturb her sleep.

Marco didn't say anything, and instead, tightened his grip on her hand. Silently, he accompanied her back to their room.

Their room had been specially prepared by Eloise, and was reminiscent of the one Loraine had stayed in as a child, though the bedding was much softer and clearly arranged with care.



Lorraine sat at the table with her head lowered.

"These past years, I haven't returned to see Mrs. Harvey often, and our communication has been infrequent... Maybe that's why she feels distant from me and didn't inform me when something this big happened."

After Lorraine was taken back to her family, they sent money to support the orphanage, and she had attempted to contact Eloise a handful of times, only hearing positive news. As a result, she had assumed that Eloise was leading a better life with the financial assistance from Torres family, and had no idea that she was being targeted by Judie.

Why didn't Eloise want to tell her what was happening?

Perhaps her reluctance stemmed from Lorraine's prolonged absence, which might have led to some resentment within her and made her feel distant from Lorraine.

Lorraine couldn't come up with any other explanations, and her thoughts became consumed with guilt and self-blame.

Observing Lorraine's melancholy expression, Marco felt a surge of heartache. He gently consoled her, his voice tender, saying, "It's not like that. Mrs. Harvey was genuinely surprised to see you return. Even I could tell. How could she have gotten mad at you when she adores you so much?"

Lorraine bit her lips and leaned over the table.

"It's my fault. I failed Mrs. Harvey," she said, her voice filled with remorse, "When I was a child, I was frequently bullied by Judie. She always called me an unwanted bastard, but Mrs. Harvey found out about it and went to the school herself, forcing the teachers to make Judie apologize to me."

As Marco thought of young Loraine enduring such insults, his brows furrowed with concern and distress.

Loraine sighed deeply as she recalled the past.

"Mrs. Harvey has always been my protector. Although I now have the ability to protect myself and others, I failed to protect her. Why wouldn't she confide in me about her difficulties? Perhaps she harbors some resentment against me because I didn't come back for so long?"

The dim and aged electrical circuit in the countryside cast a faint light which was reflected in Loraine's eyes. Her usually bright and confident eyes were now filled with vulnerability and confusion.

Marco's heart softened considerably, and his voice unconsciously carried a tender tone. "That's not true. You're such a good person. How could Mrs. Harvey possibly blame you? She probably just doesn't want you to worry."

Despite Marco's attempt to comfort her, Loraine's expression remained gloomy, indicating that his words did very little to bring her solace.

Marco sighed and continued gently, "Loraine, did you tell Mrs. Harvey about our divorce back then?"

