

Chapter 789 Dispute Between Two Sides

Sensing Ariadna's nervousness, Loraine gently comforted her, "Don't be scared, dear. Just comply with everything the doctors and nurses tell you to do and the surgery will go smoothly. After the surgery and your subsequent recovery, you can go wherever you want and see whoever or whatever you want to see. You'd like that, right?"

Ariadna nodded enthusiastically, biting her lip shyly. "Once I'm better, I'll definitely try all those exciting things I've been dreaming of doing," she said with a blush. "My family used to always keep me on a short leash, but if they try it this time, I'll just sneak away! Loraine, I hope you will take me in when the time comes."

For someone that was from a prestigious family, saying such a thing could be considered a bit too audacious. But for Ariadna, it was merely a small act of rebellion against her sheltered upbringing.

But before Loraine could respond to her question, Tillie, who had come in earlier with the nurse, began giving Ariadna some stern advice, "Miss Cruz, you can't talk like that. Your status is not ordinary. How could you..."

Tillie had to cut short her statement when she received a cold, disapproving glance from Loraine. Remembering the earlier interaction between the two of them, she quietly lowered her head in silence.

At this point, the nurse announced that she was now going to

conduct a physical examination on Ariadna. So Loraine bid farewell to Ariadna and left the room.

But as she walked down the corridor and began to approach the entrance of the laboratory, she heard raised voices coming from within the lab.

Loraine quickly rushed inside and she was able to catch the tail end of a heated argument. Jeroy was exclaiming, "Our team has the right to intervene in the surgery! The ninth-generation robot is of utmost importance, and our team must provide remote guidance! We did the same last time, so why should it be different now?"

The face of the medical director, Harlem, flushed as he too responded in an angry tone, "Our hospital was the one that performed the surgery on Mr. Torres, so we've had some clinical experience. Our lead surgeon is exceptionally skilled and knows what he's doing. We just want to conduct the surgery independently, without any external interference!"

"What the hell do you mean by that, huh?" Jeroy barked angrily.

"Sorry if my statement offended you, but it wasn't deliberate. The problem here is just that your team specializes in research, which doesn't necessarily translate to surgical expertise. As doctors, we are the ones who are professionals in this field," Harlem persisted. "I hope you can understand that the purpose of having so many experts involved in the surgery is for them to truly master the ninth-generation robot so they can better save lives, rather than being directed and monitored by a group of people without any form of clinical experience."

Now Loraine understood the general situation, and she suddenly felt a headache coming on.

She couldn't help but think that both sides had valid points.

Suddenly, both Jeroy and Harlem finally noticed her presence just at the same time.

So Loraine stepped forward and tried to mediate, saying, "You both make valid points. But how about finding a middle ground so you can reach a compromise?"

Knowing that the surgical robot was borrowed, Harlem was naturally reluctant to escalate the argument, so he bit his lip and suppressed his anger. "Miss Torres," he said, "please suggest a suitable compromise. As long as it's reasonable, I can accept it."

Jeroy, on the other hand, looked quite unhappy. He felt Harlem's statement was an indirect accusation that Solar Company was being unreasonable.

Fortunately, Loraine moved quickly to extinguish the spark that was about to ignite. "It's actually quite simple, you know," she said to both men with a warm smile. "Mr. White, Solar Company is the company that developed the ninth-generation robot. While they may lack sufficient clinical experience, their knowledge of the robot is extensive. With their guidance, we can completely eliminate the possibility of having errors in operation."

She then turned to Jeroy and said, "Solar Company, on the other hand, also needs the valuable clinical experience of the doctors once the robot is in use. In this regard, our doctors are some of the best in their fields. Therefore, Solar Company can take a step back and reduce the amount of guidance you provide. After all, in the operating room, it's only expected that everyone trusts the lead surgeon. What do you think, Jeroy?"

Jeroy didn't respond immediately.

As the person in charge of the project, he knew some things

that no one else knew. The CEO of Solar Company was particularly focused on this partnership with Universe Group.

Some in the company had even speculated that the reason was that there was a special relationship between the CEO and Loraine.

But no matter how special that relationship might be, Loraine was still an outsider. As a member of Solar Company, Jeroy felt he needed to prioritize the company's interests at all costs.

With this in mind, he responded to Loraine, "Miss Torres, I have great respect for you, but I can't help but wonder if your insistence on the idea that we must relinquish control halfway is an attempt to steal the secrets of the ninth-generation robot. You're one of those who invested in this hospital, right?"

"Nonsense!" Harlem instantly exclaimed. "We never had such intentions! How could you falsely accuse us and Miss Torres like this?"

Loraine, on her part, shook her head and sighed. "Look, Jeroy, I'm in a partnership with Solar Company, and I have no intention of stealing secrets. I believe I've been open and honest in our partnership so far. Rather, it's Solar Company that has..."

She paused for a moment and then she went on again, "One moment, you are expressing your desire to cooperate, and the next moment you're sending Doris to make things difficult for me. Now, you're even suspecting us of trying to steal secrets. I must say, I really don't understand what you're driving at."

Jeroy was present when Doris was causing unwarranted trouble the previous day, so he felt somewhat hesitant and couldn't come up with a counterargument.

But just then, something caught his eye and his face suddenly changed. Instantly, he adjusted his tone and said earnestly,

"Miss Torres, I apologize for letting my emotions cloud my judgment. I agree with everything you've said. Solar Company will step back and give the hospital the chance to work independently."

This abrupt change in his words and demeanor left Loraine puzzled. She noticed that Jeroy had looked outside the door before his sudden shift in attitude, so she turned her head to look in that direction as well, but she saw nothing.

Chapter 790 Faking An Accidental Meeting

Loraine couldn't help but wonder what Jeroy had seen.

She considered walking over to take a look, but Harlem was eager to accept the Solar Company's concession, so she ignored her curiosity and continued discussing a couple of details with the two.

Jeroy appeared distracted and didn't pose any further challenges. He hastily finalized the discussions and left.

Loraine stayed behind with Harlem to discuss other issues.

Meantime, in the corridor outside, Jeroy walked hurriedly as if searching for someone. After looking around, he finally spotted the person he was looking for sitting on a bench in the corner.

It was a young man dressed in a black jacket. Yet, he looked majestic and affluent even though he was slumped casually.

He lowered his gaze to the brochure in his hand as his long lashes cast shadows on his cheeks, concealing his emotions.

Jeroy swallowed nervously as sweat beaded his forehead. He bowed respectfully and greeted, "Boss!"

Except for a few longtime employees like Jeroy, most people had no idea that Marco was the real decision-maker of the Solar Company, as he lived far away in Kitay.

Marco set the brochure aside and looked indifferently at Jeroy.

His expression remained the same, but Jeroy could sense his aura enveloping him.

Jeroy's breathing faltered. He cleared his throat and hurriedly asked, "Boss, why have you come in person?"

Actually, his sudden change of attitude when he made concessions to Loraine and Harlem was because he had seen Marco outside the door.

Panic surged within Jeroy as he realized Marco seemed to value the cooperation with the Universe Group more than he thought.

However, his previous actions were against Marco's wishes.

As expected, Marco spoke in a cold, emotionless voice. "If I hadn't come, you would have made things difficult for Loraine just like Doris, wouldn't you?"

Jeroy shuddered and quickly apologized, "I'm sorry, boss. I didn't intend to cause any trouble for Miss Torres. I have always been loyal to you and the company. I did everything to protect the patent of the ninth-generation surgical robot and ensure the success rate of the operation."

Seeing Marco was still silent, he added, "Boss, I didn't expect Doris to interfere in this project. As soon as I noticed something was unusual, I reported it to you right away. I have no ulterior motive!"

Marco's gaze turned cold as he glared at Jeroy. "What did Doris do yesterday? Tell me."

He had immediately called Jeroy after Doris' unexpected intervention. However, he didn't know what had happened.

Loraine not only complained when she returned home but also

berated the CEO of the Solar Company.

Marco gritted his teeth in frustration. It felt like he was sitting at home, minding his own business, but trouble reigned again.

Jeroy grew anxious when he saw Marco's face darken.

He recounted every minute detail of the incident, without concealing anything, in an attempt to absolve himself. "Doris said it was a decision from the superior, so I daren't ask any more questions. I agree that it was my negligence, and I accept any punishment."

Marco remained silent. He couldn't help but think that Doris had crossed a line.

Ever since he found out Doris had returned to the country without informing him, he understood she hadn't given up on pursuing him, even though he had made everything clear to her.

He wanted to reassign Doris regardless of her reason for returning to avoid further complications.

Marco rubbed his throbbing temples. He didn't want to dwell on this for now, so he asked, "What about Loraine?"

Just as Jeroy opened his mouth, he heard Loraine unexpectedly call out Marco's name.

"Marco, what are you doing here?"

Marco looked up and saw Loraine walking up to him with a puzzled look on her face. She glanced between Jeroy and him as her frown deepened. "Do you... Do you know each other?"

She had finished business with Harlem and had been looking for Jeroy. However, he had disappeared all of a sudden.

After looking around, she finally spotted him talking with a man.

The man's figure was obscure, so Loraine couldn't make out who it was until she got closer. It was Marco.

Her eyes widened in surprise. She couldn't fathom why Marco was at the hospital and what he was doing with Jeroy.

Moreover, she became confused when she observed them. Marco was sitting while Jeroy stood beside him, shifting on his feet nervously. His demeanor reflected his respect for Marco.

Loraine, however, didn't notice that Marco looked tense.

Just as Jeroy was about to explain, Marco spoke. "I don't know him. I'm seeing him for the first time."

Jeroy almost blurted that Marco was his boss, but he swallowed his words.

Loraine raised an eyebrow in suspicion. "Oh, really? I have never seen anyone having such a long, deep conversation on their first meeting," she remarked, observing Jeroy, who seemed like he had been standing there for a while.

Marco's back stiffened. He groaned and clutched his injured leg. "Ah! It hurts a bit," he mumbled, looking at her pitifully.

Chapter 791 Another Side Of Marco

Marco's abrupt change of topic was not natural and seemed really suspicious, but since Loraine was deeply in love with him, she was easily convinced by his clumsy act.

She was so blinded by concern for him that she didn't even notice how awkward the sudden transition was. Instead, she quickly rushed to comfort him. "What's wrong? Did your wound reopen?" she asked in concern, her voice filled with worry.

Normally, it was not easy for the wound to heal completely in a short time. But during this time, he had diligently followed the doctor's orders under Loraine's strict supervision, and as a result, his progress had been quite ideal.

But after Marco played chess with Aldo all day last time, perhaps because he had not had enough rest, there seemed to be a subtle deterioration in his wound that worried Loraine deeply.

Meanwhile, Marco, with an innocent and pitiable expression on his face, kept trying hard to make his act look believable. "Actually," he said to Loraine, "I came to the hospital to change my bandages. I know you've been really busy lately, so I thought... I thought I could handle it myself."

Then, he pointed to Jeroy and said, "I got carried away just now and almost stumbled. It was this gentleman here that helped me stay steady."

Jeroy was stunned. At this moment, he felt like he was in a

dream.

Who was this man in front of him? Surely, it couldn't be his aloof, taciturn boss, right?

Marco was known to be almost unapproachable. There were rumors suggesting that Doris had openly confessed her feelings to him several times, but he either feigned ignorance or flat-out rejected her.

Now, the same man was acting like a spoiled child, and was even resorting to lying, all because of Loraine!

Jeroy couldn't believe his eyes. He wondered if he was seeing things. He just wanted to pinch himself and see if he was living in reality.

But he soon found out that he wasn't dreaming when he felt a hand slap him slightly on the shoulder. He snapped out of his reverie and looked around in confusion.

It didn't take him more than a few seconds to realize that the hand actually belonged to Loraine. She looked somewhat concerned as she asked, "Jeroy, what's wrong with you?"

"Ahem... I'm fine," Jeroy said with a slight cough, determined to play along with Marco's act. "Just like this gentleman said, it's our first meeting. I was actually looking for the restroom when I saw that he was about to stumble, so I quickly offered some assistance to prevent him from getting hurt."

Loraine, trusting his explanation, expressed her sincere gratitude, "Thank you very much for helping my boyfriend, Jeroy."

Jeroy's jaw dropped again.

So, they were really in that kind of relationship!

Clearly, he had been wrong about his previous assumptions. Now that he knew that these two were dating, it made sense why Marco had acted so decisively in dealing with Doris yesterday. Jeroy realized now how foolish he had been to have openly accused Loraine of planning to steal the robot's secrets.

Thinking back to Marco's query of him earlier, a chill ran down his spine. Fortunately for him, he never really tried to make things difficult for Loraine, otherwise Marco wouldn't have maintained this gentle demeanor he was currently exhibiting.

Jeroy had a keen eye and didn't dare to linger around as a third wheel any longer. He smiled warmly and waved his hand dismissively. "No worries at all. No need to thank me. It was just a small gesture... not worth mentioning." Then he added after pausing for a second or so, "You two go ahead and chat. I'm in a bit of a hurry to find the restroom, so I'll excuse myself now."

After bowing politely to the couple, he turned and made a hasty exit.

Loraine, seeing him leave so quickly, didn't bother to say much either. She turned her attention back to Marco, but her gaze carried a hint of reproach.

Marco instinctively sat up straight. He couldn't help but feel helpless. For the sake of one lie, he had to spin another, and as a result, the snowball of deception was growing larger and more difficult to handle with each passing moment.

He couldn't help but wonder how he would explain himself if or rather when Loraine eventually discovered his true identity.

As for Loraine herself, though she was indeed a bit angry, her predominant emotions were concern and sadness.

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As for Loraine herself, though she was indeed a bit angry, her predominant emotions were concern and sadness.

She bent down to check if the wound had reopened or was bleeding. When she saw that it wasn't, she felt somewhat relieved. Then she looked up at him and asked in annoyance, "Why did you come here by yourself? You could have just waited for me to come back to change your bandages."

She still looked very worried as she continued, "The wound seems fine on the outside, but you're in pain. Could it be a bone issue? Let's get another X-ray just to be sure."

Marco's heart immediately skipped a beat when he heard this. The excuse he had just casually made up was taken seriously by Loraine. He felt both touched and guilty at the same time. He reached out to take her hand and said in a low tone, "You've had a long day at work. I don't want you to worry about me. Besides, it's a minor thing that I can handle by myself. No need to trouble yourself about it at all."

Loraine was momentarily taken aback, a mix of helplessness and sweetness flashing across her face. Marco breathed a sigh of relief when he heard no argument from her, and then he added, "Loraine, I'll try to recover quickly so that I can assist you in more ways, so you won't be so tired anymore."

Being completely unaware of his secret job as CEO of Solar Company, Loraine smiled and said in response, "Alright, but do get well soon. That alone would be a huge help to me."

A faint smile played on the corners of Marco's lips and his eyes filled with warmth. But he didn't want to talk much anymore. He'd just been lucky enough to make her believe his lies, so he'd better just keep quiet and avoid exposing himself.

Chapter 792 Deep Love

After Marco repeatedly assured her that he was fine, Loraine finally gave up on the idea of getting another X-ray done. But still, she continued to fuss over him with great attention to every detail about his daily life.

"If you're bored at home," she told him, "you can have the domestic staff take you for a stroll. But please don't go out on your own like you did today. You were lucky to have met a kind-hearted person who saved you from falling. What if there was no one around and something bad happened?"

Marco didn't find her gentle rebuke annoying at all. On the contrary, listening to it made him feel a deep sense of contentment.

He had always yearned for the feeling of being in a loving home. But unfortunately, throughout his life, his so-called family only cared about whether he was excellent enough for the Bryant family and could bring glory and benefits to the Bryant name.

Loraine was the only person who truly loved and cared about him for who he was.

After Loraine had finished giving him her advice, Marco quietly handed her a glass of water and watched her with eyes filled with longing like that of an abandoned puppy that missed its mother.

Loraine quickly reached out to cover his eyes as she drank the water. She could feel the soft tickle of his long eyelashes on her palm as he blinked rapidly in an effort to see through her fingers.

Before she could ask him what was on his mind, Marco grabbed her hand and pulled her into his arms. His voice was deep and slightly choked with emotion as he asked, "Lorraine... Do you find me useless now that I can't help you?"

He was indeed feeling quite insecure. Despite being able to disregard the opinions of the general society, he was constantly worried that at some point, Lorraine might have thought of him as not so useful.

But Lorraine was taken aback by his sudden question. In fact, she found it both amusing and pitiful. "Why would you ever think that?" she asked him.

Then it quickly occurred to her that his lack of confidence might be due to his leg injury.

It would make sense for him to be insecure, especially since he was not used to being limited in any way. And with so many people criticizing and mocking him, it would get to him at some point, no matter how tough he was.

So Lorraine quickly hugged him and told him in a gentle yet resolute voice, "Marco, you're just injured, and you'll recover soon. Besides, you got injured in the process of saving me. How could I ever think of you as being useless?"

Then she interlocked her fingers with his and added with a chuckle, "Your hands are the only ones I've held like this, and in this lifetime, they'll be the only ones I'll hold."

Marco was deeply moved by this. He had not expected to receive such a heartwarming and sincere promise from her. He was left speechless for a long time after listening to her.

It took him a while to finally gather his thoughts before he said, "I know you're busy with work, and I don't want to keep

disturbing you. But when you're not around, I can't help but think about you all the time. It's like an addiction. I don't really know what to do about it."

Love had clearly deepened its roots within his heart. Perhaps their first meeting had been accidental to them, but it could have been a machination of fate.

During the first three years he spent with her, he hadn't cherished her properly, and now, those moments were gone forever. But he had come to realize that he couldn't spend a single moment without her by his side.

His voice, deep and sincere, conveyed his exact emotions, as if he were a child innocently expressing his affection.

Loraine blushed, but she couldn't reprimand him for his sweet talk because she could sense the genuine feelings behind his words.

Moreover, he wasn't the only one that had been tormented by longing. She missed him just as much as he missed her.

No matter what she was doing, be it gazing at mountains or clouds, he occupied her thoughts. Even during work, she would occasionally daydream with a smile on her face as she reminisced about their time together.

In the past, she didn't mind working late into the night, but nowadays, whenever the end of the workday was approaching, she found it difficult to sit still.

She longed so much to return home, to be with her lover, and to share a hot meal with him. She yearned so much to hold him in her arms before bedtime, with the starry sky and the sounds of nature as their audience as their two young and passionate hearts drew closer together.

Meanwhile, as Loraine thought of all these things, Marco saw her prolonged silence as a tacit confirmation and the best response he could hope for. He wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her into a warm embrace like a clingy dog that was seeking affection.

At this moment, his heart and eyes were filled with nothing but Loraine. In the quiet hospital corridor, with only the two of them present, they could openly bare their souls to each other.

Loraine, on her part, didn't subdue her own feelings. She leaned in closer, gently resting her head on her man's shoulder, and said softly, "If you want to think of me, then think of me with all your heart, because I can't help but think of you in the same way too. We're lovers, yearning for each other. What can be wrong with that?"

In the past, she might have felt shy and avoided such a conversation, but faced with this pitiful, insecure big puppy, she didn't mind sharing her innermost thoughts with him out here in a public place.

It was not just meant to comfort him; it was also a promise.

She believed that after all they had been through, after overcoming so many difficulties, nothing could ever come between them now.

As she whispered these sweet nothings in his ear, Marco's breath grew heavy and his gaze began to darken. He held Loraine tightly, as if he wanted to fuse her into his very being.

Suddenly, he called out her name in a low, husky voice, "Loraine."

She looked up in confusion, her captivating eyes brimming with emotion.

Chapter 792 Deep Love

 +120 Points at most

Without hesitation, Marco lowered his head and kissed her deeply.



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Chapter 793 Don't Keep Secrets from Me

This was a hospital, and even though it was quiet right now and no one was disturbing them, there was always the possibility of someone passing by.

Loraine and Marco had their lips locked in a passionate kiss on a bench by the window, the sunlight streaming in unobstructed.

This meant that anyone passing could easily see them and potentially recognize them.

When this thought finally struck Loraine, her beautiful eyes widened in alarm. She nervously stiffened up and gripped Marco's arm, but she was still too lightheaded to do anything more.

After a while, she snapped back to reality and pushed him away from her. But when she attempted to step back, Marco's firm hand firmly held the back of her head and pulled her back. He left her no time to catch her breath before he kissed her once again.

It was an irresistible display of romantic dominance.

At this point, Loraine gradually stopped trying to resist, or perhaps it was the brief lack of oxygen from the deep kiss that left her feeling dizzy. Either way, she leaned against Marco, as if she was drunk, unable to speak for what seemed like a long while.

Eventually, Marco released her, chuckling softly as he patted

her back to help her catch her breath faster.

This earned him an annoyed glare from Loraine. If it weren't for him, she wouldn't have ended up all ruffled and breathless.

Seeing the innocent expression Marco had on his face, Loraine couldn't help but grit her teeth in supposed anger and shoot him another glare, even though she was still blushing heavily.

Fortunately, no one had passed by. If they had been caught kissing in public, she just didn't know how she would have reacted.

She hid her face in Marco's arms and chided him in a muffled voice, "What's gotten into you? We're in a public place... a hospital, and you just..."

The fact that Marco had been in low spirits earlier was what had tugged at Loraine's heartstrings, so despite her embarrassment, she didn't feel genuinely angry or blame him too much.

Instead, she kept her face buried in his chest, totally oblivious of the indulgent smile on his face.

"Well, your words earlier touched me deeply, and I couldn't help myself. It was just a spontaneous overflow of feelings," he said in a playful tone.

Though Loraine couldn't see the expression on Marco's face, she could feel his fingers moving upwards toward her ear and gently playing with her earlobe.

His velvety voice was intoxicating as he added after a brief pause, "Loraine, you're the only one I've ever loved and I always find it hard to resist you."

Learning from Loraine's lips that she missed him whenever

they were not together had filled Marco with so much happiness. He felt incredibly fortunate that she was in love with him just as much as he loved her.

This made him even more determined to treat Loraine even better, since he had once disappointed her years ago, which had created an imbalance in their love life.

Loraine, unaware of the thoughts running through his mind, believed that love should never be seen as a matter of who benefited more. She was content with the fact that Marco had the same feelings for her as she did for him.

After spending some time together in each other's arms, Loraine finally told Marco about her day. She told him everything that transpired at work, except for the part where Tillie had spoken ill of her behind her back.

After telling him about all the good parts of her day without mentioning any of the unpleasant parts, she sighed deeply and said in conclusion, "The hospital has already started making arrangements for Ariadna's treatment. It sounds like it might be a bit complicated, but thankfully, everything seems to be moving in the right direction so far."

"It will go smoothly; don't worry," Marco said to reassure her.

Perhaps because both the hospital and Solar Company were preparing for the surgery, there had been no interruption from Jeroy. Loraine's job throughout the day had only consisted of escorting the robot to the hospital. After that, there was little or nothing else to keep her occupied.

Despite all the love play and discussions, she still had not forgotten their usual routine. Before long, she asked Marco to go get his bandages changed.

Though Marco had repeatedly claimed to be fine, Loraine

couldn't shake off her concern about his near-fall. She was worried that there might be hidden health issues, so she informed his doctors and insisted on a thorough examination.

But the orthopedic doctor, who had been responsible for Marco's leg injury, was left perplexed by the whole thing. After all, Marco's injury was almost completely healed, and he was even able to walk without any assistance at all.

Still, in order to make sure that everything was in good shape like he felt it was, the doctor diligently examined the wound and checked the bone. What he saw made him grow even more puzzled. He looked up at Loraine and said, "Mr. Bryant's injury is almost fully healed, and there doesn't seem to be any issue."

Marco's expression tightened slightly, but Loraine still felt very concerned. "Are you sure there are no hidden problems? He cried out in pain earlier today," she pointed out to the doctor.

After some consideration, the doctor shrugged and said, "It might be because he hasn't used this leg for a long time, which could have caused some temporary effects. I'll put together a detailed rehabilitation plan for you, so you and the rest of your family can provide extra support for his recovery process on your own."

Loraine readily agreed to this, but she failed to notice the subtle sigh of relief that escaped Marco's lips.

After receiving the medication and rehabilitation plan from the doctor, Loraine contacted Jeroy and informed him that she would be leaving first as she had to take Marco home. Jeroy assured her that there was no need for her to return to the hospital because he and Harlem could handle things without her help.

Loraine thanked him for his understanding and immediately returned home with Marco. Still a little shaken, she sighed to

Marco, "Thank God nothing serious happened. I was really worried about you, you know".

Marco, who was seated right beside her, feeling guilty, replied, "I won't let it happen again. I'll be careful next time."

Seeing his obedient look, Loraine felt her heart soften. "I know you are trying not to stress me out or bother me, but we're together now. You can't keep things from me like you used to. We have to be open and honest with each other. Don't hide things from me," she admonished him.