

Chapter 780 Two Women Met

At the airport exit, Loraine was waiting for the Solar Company representatives. To show her respect, she personally assembled a welcoming group of Universe Group executives for them.

As the scheduled meeting time approached, Loraine's eyes caught the approach of a woman flanked by bodyguards. She was carrying a secured box.

Loraine inferred this to be the Solar Company's contingent and stepped forward in welcome.

Nearing the group, a wave of déjà vu washed over Loraine as she observed the lead woman's visage. It was a face oddly familiar.

Though the woman radiated confidence and beauty, Loraine puzzled over the sense of recognition.

Surely, an encounter with such a remarkable individual would linger in memory.

Only upon seeing the woman's beaming expression did Loraine remember. This was the same woman from Marco's commemorative album. Her smile there was even more dazzling, clinging to a man.

At that time, the man's identity eluded Loraine, yet she felt assured that he must be special to elicit such joy from this woman.

Upon recognition, Loraine greeted them with a warm smile and an outstretched hand, "It's a pleasure to meet you all. I'm



Loraine Torres, here on behalf of Universe Group to extend our welcome."

Doris, her lips a striking crimson, returned a smile but withheld her hand. Instead, she studied Loraine with a piercing, complex look, tinged by a slight animosity.

The two women, both remarkably attractive and adorned in lavish outfits, naturally captured the crowd's gaze.

Loraine, in her pristine white gown, radiated a celestial grace, her smile inviting yet tinged with a noble detachment, as if she were a captivating but distant goddess.

Doris, in vivid red, presented herself with undeniable presence.

Between them, in sheer beauty, Loraine's features held a subtle advantage, seemingly sculpted by divine hands.

Her looks were a gift of the gods, impeccably flawless.

The silence had been slightly longer than anticipated, and a sense of oddness began to tickle Loraine's thoughts. Yet, her perfect smile stayed intact as she offered Doris a warm, courteous look.

A flicker of jealousy flashed in Doris' eyes. She had taken great care in her appearance for this encounter, confident she would not be outshone.

But standing before this rural beauty, Doris unexpectedly found herself outmatched in both charm and appearance.

The longer she stood there, her pettiness grew more evident.

Dismissing Loraine's offered hand with nonchalance, Doris calmly remarked, "Let's skip the pleasantries. My years abroad have left me indifferent to such formalities. Miss Torres, let's

cut to the chase."

Caught off guard by the animosity from a woman she had never met, Loraine pondered if there was discontent within Solar Company about the loan of the surgical robot.

This speculation made Loraine even more resolute to value this chance. She hid any sign of displeasure and politely ushered Doris towards the company for their meeting.

They soon reached the Universe Group's headquarters.

The Universe Group, a legacy that had weathered many years, owed its longevity to its substance over superficial appearance.

Its building radiated a vintage allure.

Those acquainted with its history saw it as understated elegance, while others, uninformed, might misjudge the Universe Group's financial stance, assuming a lack of funds for modern updates.

Doris belonged to the second group.

She released a scornful chuckle, her disdain for Universe Group intensifying. She grew more convinced that Marco's decisions were swayed by his personal fondness for Loraine, compromising Solar Company's interests.

When her eyes landed on Loraine, they frosted over. In times long past, such a woman would have been labeled a destroyer of empires, a seductress with calamitous charm.

The sharp stares from Doris registered with Loraine, yet she let them slide. She guided Doris to the conference room and laid out a printed contract.

"Here's the printed version of the agreement we previously

discussed with Solar Company's delegates. I've marked several principal elements for your consideration. Miss Hoffman, please review it. If all seems in order, we can move forward with the signing."

Loraine presented the contract's essentials, presuming Doris's acquaintance with the terms, and passed it to her.

Doris took the document, offering it a cursory look before putting it aside, her lips twitching with a trace of derisive laughter.

To Doris, the limited details for such a vital project and such a crucial contract suggested either Loraine's incompetence or her detachment from the project's specifics.

It appeared that Loraine, lacking professional roots, was not up to managing the project's complexities. Aiming to show Loraine up, Doris smirked and remarked, "Miss Torres, in spite of my long time living overseas, Universe Group's notability has reached me. Yet, for such a major collaboration, I'm only offered a brief overview, huh?"

Caught off guard, Loraine was gearing up to respond when Doris, feigning regret, interjected, "Would you indulge me with a more thorough rundown, Miss Torres? It's crucial to ascertain our partnership's depth and the Solar Company's commitment."



Chapter 781 Contract Details

Doris' statement was filled with arrogance. After all, except for a few famous families that Solar Company envied and looked up to, they had all the confidence they needed to look down on everyone else in Kitay.

The reason she had asked Loraine how much she knew about Solar Company was not just to show off but also to scare her.

Doris was waiting to see the desired reaction on Loraine's face, but all she saw was Loraine looking at Jeroy in confusion.

Previously, Loraine had negotiated the contract with Jeroy. The details of the contract had already been settled verbally, and Solar Company had transferred the money to them.

Why was the negotiator that was sent by Solar Company making such a request now? It was making her look as if she knew nothing about this project.

Jeroy, on the other hand, could only shrug helplessly when Loraine looked at him. He himself was not happy with the situation, but there was nothing he could do about it.

When Doris didn't hear a response from Loraine, she sneered, "Miss Torres, you know nothing about this project, right?"

This time, her hostility was so obvious that Loraine couldn't pretend not to notice it.

It was now very clear that this beauty named Doris did not like her and was determined to make things difficult for her.

But even though Loraine didn't know why Doris was doing it, she was determined to make sure that Doris would not succeed in embarrassing her.

So she chuckled and said, "I've discussed this project with the person in charge of this project at Solar Company many times in the past, but it seems perhaps you're not familiar with this project. In that case, I'll just repeat it to you."

When Doris heard this, she felt embarrassed. Was Loraine mocking her? How dare she!

Not paying any attention to Doris' reaction, Loraine opened the PowerPoint presentation and began to explain the project in detail.

From the very beginning, Loraine had been in charge of this project, so she knew more about it than anyone else.

Confidently and calmly, she explained every detail of it without missing a beat. She summarized and simplified several important points to make them clear. Even people who had never been involved in the project before would understand it if they listened to her.

But Doris' face only darkened as she listened to the explanation.

She had told Jeroy at the airport that she knew everything about this project, but she didn't even know that Loraine had been working on this project from the very beginning!

Her efforts so far to make things difficult for Loraine had only succeeded in making her own self look ridiculous.

At this point, after making a few big points, Loraine said, "Solar Company is willing to pay 100% advance, which fully shows how sincere it is. In return, Universe Group will provide nothing



short of excellent quality. We've already arranged several production lines for this purpose."

Doris had her fingernails sunk deep into her palm in anger as she heard this part of the explanation. She was more embarrassed than ever. 100% advance payment??

Even she didn't know that Marco had made such a decision concerning this project!

It was obvious that he had done it for personal reasons. This was a clear case of cutting profit to favor Universe Group.

But knowing Marco, she was sure that he could do even more for Loraine!

All this time, she had tried her best to get close to Marco. But no matter how hard she worked to run the company for him, she just couldn't succeed in making him fall in love with her. The closest she could go to him was when she talked to him as a friend.

Yet, such a cold and unapproachable man had made an exception for Loraine again and again!

Doris was mad with jealousy. She glanced at Loraine with hatred in her heart, but she tried not to show it on her face. After Loraine had finished explaining, she just nodded slightly and said in a cold tone, "I know all these. In that case, let's just inspect the ninth generation robot."

Immediately, the bodyguard behind her opened the sealed box, revealing a small medical robot.

Even though Loraine had seen it before, she still couldn't help but feel excited at the sight of it again. She approached it to carefully inspect it. The members of Universe Group's scientific research team were all in awe. They also approached the robot



carefully. In fact, their careful and eager looks were really funny to see.

Among them, a young man with blond hair was the most excited. If not that the robot was sealed in the bulletproof glass box, he would have grabbed it.

He stared at it very intently. It looked like a near supernatural material even to a genius like him and he couldn't help but say, "Wow. This is indeed the most advanced technology in the world."

Jeroy was shocked to see this young man making such a statement.

This was the young chief engineer, Allen Norris! For crying out loud, he was a genius!

But Doris, on the other hand, felt proud and pompous when she saw the reaction of the staff of Universe Group, and she said to them arrogantly and contemptuously, "The patent of this robot belongs to Solar Company. We've just been merciful enough to share it with Universe Group. You should be grateful."

Loraine frowned in displeasure when she heard this, but she didn't bother to respond to Doris.

Nevertheless, Doris continued, "But why did you stop at just creating several production lines in exchange for a 100% advance payment? That's not enough to maximize the benefits. Is this how you repay Solar Company? It seems our senior leaders may have to consider finding a more sincere partner."

Allen glared at Doris in displeasure as he listened to her. Even Loraine couldn't keep her smile anymore. Immediately, Jeroy could sense the tense atmosphere between the two.

Then he hesitated for a moment. He was forbidden to disturb



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the CEO unless something big had happened. But then, the current situation was big enough, wasn't it?

So he secretly sent an instant message to Marco.



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Chapter 782 Doris' Being Difficult

Inside the conference room, the atmosphere remained tense.

Naturally, everyone in Universe Group appreciated Solar Company, to the extent that Allen who occupied such a high position had personally gone to the airport to receive the staff of Solar Company.

After all, during critical moments, Solar Company had intervened to help Loraine. Hence, staff of Universe Group warmly welcomed their visit with goodwill.

But all this warmth and goodwill had been completely ignored by Doris.

It was now evident to everyone that Doris had ulterior motives of her own and was determined to make things difficult for Loraine.

Allen, now looking like a fierce little puppy, glared at Doris and whispered to Loraine, "Loraine, I'll develop something even more powerful for you in the future! We don't have to collaborate with them at all!"

Loraine gently patted Allen on the head and told him to calm down.

When she turned her attention back to Doris, her demeanor remained polite and composed, but her attitude now shifted from that of welcoming a friend to one of accommodating a troublesome client.

"Doris, these production lines were created according to the previously agreed-upon contract," she explained as if she was talking to a child. "Moreover, what's required for the production of this ninth generation robot is top-notch technology, not just shoddy mass production. Universe Group's production lines are more than sufficient to meet the requirements of Solar Company."

Doris raised an eyebrow and replied in a haughty tone, "Talk is cheap. Universe Group and Solar Company have never been in a partnership before. So how can I trust you? If you're trying to convince me with just a few words, you'd better spare yourself the effort."

Loraine felt a twinge of irritation but she still kept her composure as she asked, "So, what do you suggest then?"

"It's very simple. Prove it to me. Let me see if Universe Group really has such power," Doris replied.

She was acting in an extremely arrogant manner. Her contempt for Universe Group was very evident. Her words were filled with condescension, more like that of someone playing with a pet. It was as if she was saying, "Do you want me to grant you the opportunity to partner with me? Show me the proof that you have the qualifications for such a partnership."

Upon hearing this, Loraine's expression turned cold and angry.

Though she didn't want to jeopardize their already strained relationship any further, but so far, her concessions had only led to more and more humiliation and difficulties.

She just couldn't fathom when she provoked this seductive and venomous woman that had made her so relentless in attacking her.

After thinking about it for a while, Loraine couldn't help but put it down to the "interests" thing.

Solar Company had lent the surgical robots twice to her on two occasions, primarily because of Marco's influence. It was almost as if they were doing her a favor at a loss to themselves.

Loraine strongly suspected that Marco's influence wasn't enough to make everyone willingly accept this arrangement that had been taking place between the both of them. Perhaps some high-ranking individuals were dissatisfied and seeking to recoup perceived losses, which might be what had led to the involvement of this troublemaker called Doris.

In fact, there was no free lunch. To some extent, the move by the members of Solar Company was quite reasonable.

But for the sake of the interests of Universe Group, Loraine couldn't let this continue. Otherwise, it would only make Solar Company look down on them which would in turn make Universe Group the weaker party in the partnership.

As a result, Loraine's demeanor shifted as she now adopted the attitude she usually used in business negotiations. In a calm tone, she said to Doris, "Since you don't believe in the capabilities of Universe Group, it's indeed necessary for you to see it with your own eyes. That way, there won't be any baseless claims made by those who are unaware of our group's true capabilities."

Doris' expression darkened, and she only let out a cold snort in response. She was trying her best not to look angry.

Without another word, Loraine stood up and led everyone from the conference room to a Universe Group factory where a production line was running.

The visit was a sudden and unplanned one. Even the factory's managers had not been notified in advance. So, when Loraine and her group arrived, the employees were somewhat surprised to see her bringing outsiders for a tour.

The workers greeted the visitors with smiles, but none of them stopped working even for a minute.

Every employee had their role on the assembly line, and with collective efforts, precision instruments were being produced one after another at a fast pace.

The factory was massive, and Loraine took Doris to several areas, personally explaining the functions of each area with great expertise.

The expression on Doris' face became one of surprise and shame. Clearly, Loraine was not the type to sit high in her office, making decisions from afar without understanding the reality on ground.

Instead, she had ventured deep into the grassroots. In fact, she had even started her career from the bottom, allowing her to interact warmly and courteously with lower level staff.

Doris, on the other hand, didn't possess this vast level of experience and expertise. Having sat in high positions for too long, she had long stopped caring about those at the lower levels.

Soon, a supervisor came over to greet them and jokingly teased Loraine, "Miss Torres, you didn't even inform us of your visit in advance. Are you here for a surprise inspection to check if we're slacking off?"

Loraine chuckled and replied, "Our distinguished guest here was concerned about Universe Group's production lines, so I

invited her for a tour."

The so-called distinguished guest maintained a stoic expression on her face, but internally, she was deeply shocked. Be it the assembly line, the production line or any other section, Doris couldn't find any faults whatsoever.

In fact, she realized that this production line was even handled better than that of Solar Company.

It was clear to her now that what Loraine had said earlier was not an exaggeration, but the truth.

After the tour, Loraine asked Doris with a smile, "Do you have any further suggestions? If you find anything unsatisfactory, please let us know so we can make improvements."

Doris didn't even know what to say. She could only frown in displeasure.

When Loraine heard no response from her, she asked in a mocking tone, "So, Doris, have you changed your mind now?"



Chapter 783 The Strange Hostility Of Doris

Doris fell into silence. She had now been forced to reevaluate her perception of Universe Group.

She had seen that, despite its low-key appearance, Universe Group possessed substantial capabilities.

If Loraine was not its CEO, and if there were no emotional ties between Loraine and Marco, Doris wouldn't miss an opportunity to partner with such a company.

After all, the effectiveness of Universe Group was fully proven. The factory she had just seen had told her everything she needed to know about the greatness of the Group.

Now, she had no choice but to conclude that Marco's partnership with Universe Group wasn't solely driven by emotional considerations.

But still, she was not willing to openly admit Loraine's excellence because that would mean giving up the person she loved.

Hence, Doris maintained a blank expression on her face, making sure to hide her internal emotions. She tried to act like she had reluctantly acknowledged the competence of Universe Group but still felt it wasn't up to par. "Universe Group's production lines are indeed impressive. But your factory has gotten used to producing construction equipment. The ninth-generation robot, on the other hand, is a precision instrument. They are two different things," she pointed out in a critical tone.

Lorraine nodded in agreement, and without arrogantly dismissing her point, she replied, "Universe Group will improve, and going forward, we will work even more closely with Solar Company so we can learn much more advanced technology from you guys."

Doris wanted to keep pressuring Lorraine, but she found herself lost for words.

She knew that she had already gone too far today, and by now, everyone had noticed her excessive demands and complaints.

As a result, she softened her tone and said, "I'm just being cautious so that everything can be done perfectly, which will further strengthen our partnership. It pays to be careful when dealing with new partners. And also, our boss requires us to be careful and uncompromising. I hope you don't mind."

Though Doris' attitude had softened, there was still a trace of arrogance in her tone.

Lorraine couldn't help but sigh in resignation. She understood that Doris had a point, especially considering the size of Solar Company and the importance of the ninth-generation robot project. Hence, being cautious was undoubtedly a necessity.

But the constant problem was that Doris' tone was far from pleasant. She spoke in such a way that made her feel somewhat belittled.

Solar Company hadn't always been like this. When she dealt with the likes of Sullivan, he was much more approachable.

Thinking of Sullivan, the scientist with the messy hair, Lorraine couldn't help but smile and blurt out, "Sullivan used to say that the CEO of Solar Company often praised me. He even mentioned that I've led Universe Group to secure deals with



much bigger groups, making us the top choice for partnership in Vagow and even across Kitay. Now, it seems like Sullivan was only trying to flatter me."

Doris' expression stiffened when she heard this. But she quickly pasted a smile on her face to mask her shock. Still, the smile looked like an ice mask that would shatter at the slightest touch.

She couldn't pay attention to the rest of Loraine's words. Her mind focused solely on what Loraine had said about getting praised by the CEO of her company.

Jealousy boiled within her heart. The Marco she knew was never one to compliment anyone. He was as unemotional as a block of wood.

But when it came to Loraine, why was he always a different person altogether? Clearly, he had been secretly praising Loraine behind her back and saying wonderful things about her to other staff of the company. The thought of all these made Doris extremely furious.

But she took a deep breath and tried to conceal her emotions. "I'm sure he was just being polite," she said with a chuckle, in a bid to downplay the significance of Sullivan's statement. "He is just a researcher, you know. What does he know about the decisions of the executives? The CEO would likely not discuss such things with him."

Loraine was momentarily taken aback by this statement; she was surprised at how outspoken Doris was. Although she also believed that Sullivan's statement had been made to make her feel good, it wasn't common for someone to be as blunt as Doris.

In fact, this was not just a matter of being outspoken. It was a matter of... a lack of emotional intelligence, perhaps?

She just couldn't believe that it was as a result of Doris for living abroad for so long like she claimed.

Loraine herself had also studied abroad before, and she found that most foreigners were quite enthusiastic. They had showered her with warmth and affection on several occasions.

But whether her business partner was too outspoken or had low emotional intelligence, Loraine didn't particularly mind. She just flashed her a professional, business-like smile.

But Doris gave her a sidelong glance and said haughtily, "Based on the years I've spent being by my boss' side, I understand him very well. He is always busy with myriad tasks. He's a far-sighted and forward-thinking man. He probably wouldn't pay too much attention to a CEO of a small enterprise in Vagow."

Then she paused, acting as if she hoped Loraine would understand, before continuing, "As my boss's right-hand woman, I have to be cautious when dealing with new companies on his behalf. After all, Solar Company is an enterprise that we built together. I'm sure you understand, right?"

Loraine maintained her business-like smile and replied with an enthusiastic nod, "You're absolutely right. I understand you completely!"

But in her mind, she found the situation increasingly baffling. This woman seemed to be intimately acquainted with her boss and was displaying a high level of possessiveness in her tone.

Yet, Loraine had never met the CEO of Solar Company, let alone spoken to him. So why on earth was this woman repeatedly asserting her possessiveness over her CEO so blatantly?

She just couldn't fathom Doris' intentions, and frankly, she

Chapter 783 The Strange Hostility Of Doris



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didn't really want to. After offering that perfunctory response, she just hoped Doris would hurry up, sign the contract, and go away so she could leave work early. After all, Marco had arranged some of her favorite dishes for her.

But just then, Doris' phone rang.

In normal business etiquette, since they were both corporate executives, the person receiving the call would typically apologize to the other one before picking the call. But Doris didn't even spare a glance in Loraine's direction. Instead, she took out her phone and just answered it.

But barely a few seconds into the call, her expression changed slightly into one of surprise and confusion as she said, "Boss?"



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