

## Chapter 387 Identity

The instant the words left Marina's mouth, the entire living room went deathly silent.

Laura and Liza cast nervous eyes in Marco's direction.

Marco was shocked. He doubted if his ears were working properly.

His eyes were scary wide and trained on Marina as he asked, "What did you just say?"

Marina's eyes widened in panic as she realized she had spilled the beans. She had acted too impulsively.

Liza had warned her repeatedly that Marco was to never know the truth.

There was also the fact that she and Laura had to be dependent on Marco for now.

If Marco knew the truth, he would never help them clean their messes.

Marina shrunk back and turned her guilty eyes away from him. "Nothing... I said nothing."

Marco's eyes darkened as he narrowed them at Marina.

What Loraine told him suddenly came to mind.

Truly, how else would Marina have the guts to yell at him if it was not that they were keeping something from him?

### An illegitimate child?

Marina was simple-minded; it was impossible for her to keep secrets.

"What did you just say, Marina?"

Marco walked closer to Marina, pressing in on her. Her legs instantly felt weak, and she crumpled to the floor, quickly turning to Liza and Laura in sheer panic, her eyes welling with tears.

Liza's eyes darkened as she saw that Marina was on the brink of giving in. She stormed forward and gave Marina a heavy slap across the face.

"Grandma?" Marina shrieked in disbelief.

Liza had no intentions of stopping. She landed another slap and screamed in anger, "You deserve it! How dare you speak such rubbish?"

Liza had used so much force to slap Marina that Marina's face swelled up. Marina looked pitiful on the floor with her red, swollen cheeks, tear-streaked face, and messy hair.

She slumped to the floor the next second in shock.

Laura's eyes blazed with fury as she looked at her daughter's pitiful state. All the anger she had been suppressing for years finally burst out.

She had been a widow for over twenty years, and Liza was still around, treating her like trash.

Now, even Loraine could humiliate her.

Enough was enough. Laura rushed forward to stand in front

of her daughter and shrieked, "And what about it? What Marina said is the truth!"

Liza pulled a long face. "You shut your mouth!"

However, Laura was done being silenced. She laughed manically and pointed a finger at Marco.

"You're a stinking bastard! What on earth gives you the right to look down on me? You're a bastard who doesn't even know who gave birth to you."

Marco's face paled and he subconsciously stepped back in shock.

He could only stare at the manic woman in front of him, her words bouncing around in his ears.

Bastard... He was a bastard?

Although Laura never treated him well, he never doubted that she was his mother.

If she wasn't his mother, then who was?

Who birthed him?

Marco had never been more confused in his life.

Laura was so filled with anger, all her logic was out the window. She pressed on with indescribable joy from finally being able to say all she had kept in for so many years.

"Just who do you think yourself to be, Marco? The truth is I have nothing to do with you. You're simply Winfred's bastard from random sex he had with some bitch!"

Marco was in shock, and his face was expressionless.

He wanted to ask if Laura was only saying this to irritate him. But he was unable to produce a single sound.

No matter how he assured himself he was indifferent to his family, he couldn't keep sane hearing that his entire life for the past twenty years had been a lie.

Laura laughed manically again.

"I should never have taken you in. I brought you up like my own child, and you turned out so ungrateful. Now, you prefer helping Loraine over us! Marina and I wouldn't have turned out so miserable if not for you! Do you have no conscience, Marco Bryant?"



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## Chapter 388 The Past

The living room was silent except for Laura's hysterical voice, which echoed through the space.

Everyone else was taken aback.

Marco, however, was slow to come to his senses.

He gazed at Laura, noticing the genuine resentment etched on her face and devoid of any pretense.

"I see. Ha-ha."

As realization dawned on Marco, he chuckled bitterly, taking a few steps back.

He understood why Laura had been indifferent to him since childhood and why she only seemed to have affection for Marina.

When Laura bought Marina her favorite dolls and snacks, he went to Laura to show off his success and wanted to earn some praises.

Upon seeing him, she stopped smiling and led Marina away. Liza urged him to return to his studies and continue to learn the profound knowledge that was far beyond his age.

As soon as he grew up a bit, he was quickly sent to another country. Later on, he became more emotionally detached and distant from his family as he developed a colder and more indifferent personality.

Now, he finally grasped that he was not Laura's son, but an illegitimate child brought back by his father.

It was understandable why Laura had been cold to him. No woman would welcome the child of her husband's infidelity.

Feeling suffocated, Marco lowered his eyes and made his way to the door, eager to leave this unwelcoming home.

Just as he turned around, Liza finally came to her senses.

"Wait, Marco!"

Liza stopped him, but she didn't know what to say. She never expected things to be exposed so suddenly, and she couldn't believe that Laura would do such a thing.

Liza wore a chilly expression as she raised her cane threateningly to strike Laura.

"Bastard! Do the Bryant family still matter to you? What are you talking about?"

Laura's old wounds, inflicted by Liza, had not healed yet, and Marina had just been beaten ruthlessly by Liza.

It finally dawned on Laura that she and her daughter were nothing in Liza's eyes.

Marina might have been the rightful heiress of the Bryant family, but she couldn't compare to Marco, who could bring benefits to the family, even though he was born out of wedlock.

Laura quickly rose to shield herself from the cane and retorted with excitement.

"You know I'm not talking nonsense!" Her teeth clenched

as she continued, "You simply dislike my daughter because she's a girl. You've always favored Marco. But let me remind you, Marina is the true heiress of the Bryant family."

"Shut up!" Liza's anger was palpable as her chest heaved, and she pointed at Laura while rebuking her.

"I always favor Marco? I've done everything I can to support this family after my son passed away. And what have you and your daughter done besides asking for money? Laura, how dare you make such an accusation? You've never even lifted a finger to help take care of Marco when he was growing up."

"I..." Laura hesitated, unable to come up with a response.

"Ever since my son left, Bryant Group has been deteriorating. Don't think I'm unaware that you wanted to sell your shares and abandon this family during that critical period. If Marco hadn't returned from overseas, taken over Bryant Group, and brought it back from the brink of collapse, making it bigger and stronger, do you think you would still have the privilege of being Mrs. Bryant?"

Liza continued to dig out past grudges, causing Laura's face to turn blue and black.

Marco, however, found everything ridiculous.

Unable to bear the spectacle any longer, he left the bickering Bryant family behind and strode away, his departure tinged with self-mockery.

As he stepped outside, he noticed that dark clouds were gathering in the sky.

Without showing any emotion, Marco got into the car, started the engine, pressed down on the accelerator, and

drove away without glancing back.

The sound of the whistling wind suddenly filled the open window. Marco tightly pursed his lips and couldn't help but recall what had just happened in his mind.

His veins stood out as he held the steering wheel tightly.

If someone had sat next to him, they would have noticed that Marco's eyes were red and he was breathing heavily.

Before long, the car left the suburban villas behind and the traffic on the road started to get busier. But Marco didn't care and he kept going at the same speed.

He saw something in front of him that looked like it had been twisted by a hand into a strange shape.

His ears were ringing and he couldn't see or hear anything else around him.

The Lincoln was heading straight to the intersection when suddenly a truck came rushing out from the side.

Suddenly, the unique ringtone he had assigned for Loraine started playing through the Bluetooth in his car.

It turned out to be a call from her!

Abruptly, Marco snapped out of his daze and quickly stepped on the brakes.





## Chapter 389 Redemption

As Marco drove down the road, a massive truck zoomed past him, barely missing his car. A haze of dust billowed behind him.

The body of the black Lincoln beside him was only half visible, and the truck's recklessness was a recipe for disaster.

Marco's heart skipped a beat as he slammed on the brakes. He pulled over to the side of the road, took a deep breath, and exhaled a sigh of relief.

Just as the caller was about to quit, he picked up the phone.

The caller seemed surprised that he had answered, letting out a sigh. She felt relieved that the call had gotten through.

"Loraine..." Marco whispered, his voice hoarse with emotion. He had so much to say, but all that came out was her name.

The sound of her name alone sent shivers down his spine, as if a bolt of lightning had struck his empty heart, filling it with newfound power.

His limbs had been dormant until this very moment as if he had been in a deep slumber. But now, he was awake and fully aware of his physical being.

His fingers tightly clenched around the phone as his voice quivered and his breath became ragged. His emotions were in disarray, a whirlwind of feelings he couldn't contain.

Loraine could sense something amiss and confusion colored her voice as she said, "Marco?"

As relief washed over him, Marco took a deep breath and spoke softly, his voice barely above a whisper. "Yes, it's me."

"Are you all right?"

He wasn't his usual composed self, and she could sense it.

With each passing moment on the phone, Marco's expression relaxed, until a small smile crept onto his face.

"I'm fine. Why are you calling me, Loraine?"

Doubt clouded Loraine's mind, but she pushed it aside and dove into the fray.

"I've sealed the deal with Cheap and Fine Group. I need to talk with you about the particulars of the cooperation. When might you be available?"

Truthfully, Loraine was in no rush. After all, she was not ready to talk to Marco face to face.

Laura and Marina destroyed her plan.

Despite her misgivings, everything seemed to be going swimmingly so far.

Loraine continued, "Thanks to Laura and Marina, the cooperation between Cheap and Fine Group and the two groups is spreading like wildfire. I propose we go public while the buzz is still hot."

As the rumors swirled on the web, Davy valiantly stepped forward to defend his beloved wife, earning the admiration of countless people.

His gallant defense was not the only thing that caught their attention. His wit and striking good looks proved equally irresistible, and he soon amassed a legion of followers.

It was the best timing for the three groups to announce their cooperation.

After a while, Loraine realized that Marco had gone quiet. "Marco, are you there?"

"Yes, I'm listening."

His eyes were fixed intently on the road ahead, hands firmly gripping the steering wheel. He listened with rapt attention to every word she uttered, his gaze brimming with affection.

Oddly enough, he could almost visualize the expression on her face. Despite the distance between them, he could almost see the subtle play of emotions flicker across her eyes as she spoke.

Was she leaning against the window, gazing out at the passing scenery as they talked?

Were they looking at the same sky?

The ominous clouds dispersed, unveiling a sky that slowly transformed into a pastel-pink masterpiece. A gust of wind snuck in through the open window and warmth began to creep in.

As the image of Loraine's furrowed brow flickered in his mind, Marco's heart melted.

Loraine's voice acted as a balm, soothing Marco's melancholic mood.

It appeared that as long as Loraine was by his side, he could finally let his guard down and find peace.

No matter how tough the day had been, nothing mattered to Marco as much as Loraine did.

While Marco sat in silence, Loraine couldn't help but notice his unusual demeanor.

Though Marco had always been reserved, he had never sunk into such a deep despair as he had today.

Loraine couldn't resist asking, "Marco, are you truly alright? Did something happen?"

With a chuckle, Marco responded, "Are you worrying about me?"

Loraine felt a twinge of awkwardness and hummed, attempting to mask her emotions.

"As if I care about you. Don't get too full of yourself. I'm solely concerned that something bad will happen to you and hinder our program's advancement."

As Marco's lips curled into a smile, his heart ached with an indescribable desire.

"Loraine, I want to see you right now."

He had no desire to discuss work, his sole intention was to be in her company.

Loraine was left bewildered. "Right now?"

After a brief moment of recklessness, Marco composed himself. He cleared his throat and asked, "Didn't you ask about my availability to discuss the project? I am free now."

Do you have any problem with that?"

The final query caught Loraine off guard once more. Although she was unsure of the cause, she sensed that something was amiss with Marco today.

She deliberated for a moment before consenting.

"Okay, I shall forward you the location."



## Chapter 390 Listen Carefully

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Loraine hurriedly sent the address of a coffee shop to Marco, then stopped working to rush there.

Upon arriving, she found Marco already waiting for her.

He was so fast!

Despite her being nearer to the coffee shop, he got there before her. How did he manage to arrive first?

Wasn't he meant to be at his company?

As Loraine approached his table, Marco stood up and pulled out the chair opposite him for her to sit.

After she sat down, he continued to stare at her without speaking.

Loraine withdrew her hand in a sulky manner and cleared her throat uncomfortably once she had sat down.

It could have been her imagination, but when he was gazing at her in silence, he was like a big dog eagerly waiting to be adopted after being left behind by its previous owner.

Marco appeared pitiful.

She couldn't help but notice his usual cold demeanor.

How could she feel any sense of pity for someone like him?

Lorraine shook her head, trying to rid herself of the thought.

As they sat at the coffee shop, the waiter approached them and asked what they wanted. He enthusiastically recommended their couple's set. "You two just came at the right time. We are offering a set for couples. Buy one and get one free!"

Lorraine quickly clarified, "We are not a couple!"

Marco coughed but said nothing.

The coffee shop was filled with the sweet melody of a piano playing Love Story, which only added to the awkwardness of the situation.

The waiter misinterpreted Lorraine's response and looked at them with an ambiguous expression.

To dispel the awkward atmosphere, Lorraine decided to order two cups of coffee. "We need to talk about business."

The waiter persisted, "But you can also give the set for couples a try. You won't regret it."

"No, thanks!"

Once Lorraine had finished, Marco spoke up at last. "I'll have one with sugar and one without, please."

Lorraine let out a sigh of relief as the tension in the air dissipated.

She wanted to ask Marco more about what was going on, but the awkward atmosphere made it difficult. She didn't want to pry too much.

Lorraine took a deep breath to calm herself down and began

unfolding the document she had prepared.

Once she got into a working state, she forgot all about her earlier strange idea and instead focused on carefully analyzing the document.

"In the future, Cheap and Fine Group will be located within our business district. This presents an opportunity for us to create a trading hub and develop commercial properties around it..."

She appeared to be glowing with confidence and professionalism, speaking eloquently and confidently.

However, Marco wasn't listening to her at all.

He just stared blankly at her lips as she spoke, not hearing a word she said.

Her soft, pleasant voice blended in with the piano music, becoming background noise.

Loraine finished speaking and took a sip of her coffee, but Marco still didn't respond.

Confused, she looked up and saw that he had been staring at her the whole time.

He held the document in his hands upside down, indicating that his mind was not focused on work at all!

Loraine felt both embarrassed and annoyed. She had made time to discuss business with him, but Marco's attitude was far from satisfactory.

Frustrated, Loraine patted the document and stood up, saying coldly, "Since you're not in the mood to talk business right now, let's not waste each other's time. I have other



matters to attend to. Goodbye."

Marco was taken aback and became anxious. He quickly grabbed Loraine's arm to stop her and said, "Loraine, please don't go. I..."

As Marco stood up in a hurry, he knocked over the coffee on the table, surprising Loraine.

In a split second, the coffee spilled all over his light-colored suit, leaving him feeling embarrassed and stained.

Concerned about Loraine's involvement, Marco released his grip, causing the coffee to drip down his clothes, and leaving him at a loss.

Witnessing the astonishment on Marco's face, Loraine couldn't help but burst into laughter, forgetting her anger.

Marco, relieved to see her smile, asked helplessly, "Are you still angry with me?"

Loraine snorted but remained silent.

Marco then approached her cautiously and said, "I'm sorry. I was absent-minded just now. I won't do that again."

He acted humbly, as if he was afraid that she would walk away.

What was the matter with him today? He looked so fragile.

Loraine refrained from asking and instead sat back in her seat.

"Okay, let's continue."

Marco, not wanting to make any mistakes, removed his



dirty suit and placed it on the back of the chair, listening carefully to Loraine.

As she looked up, Loraine noticed that part of Marco's shirt was wet and clung to his body, revealing his muscular outline.

Her mind couldn't stop recalling what she had seen before. As soon as she saw him naked, she couldn't focus on anything else.

When Loraine regained her composure, she asked, "Do you want to go to the bathroom and clean yourself up first?"

