

Chapter 556 Celebration

Loraine found herself mesmerized by the messages on the floating balloons outside her window. In that split second, one of the balloons descended and popped as it collided with an object.

Simultaneously, a soft sound, reminiscent of a bursting balloon, echoed from her phone.

Caught off guard, Loraine looked out the window to examine the balloon debris, and her gaze fell on a man garbed in a suit, standing below.

As though aware of her gaze, he looked up and their eyes met.

A smile crossed Marco's face and his resonant voice traveled from the phone to her ear. "Do you like it?"

Loraine was lost for words. All she knew was the yearning to meet this individual who was right there before her.

Driven by a sudden rush of emotions, she turned around and sprinted towards the exit, leaving her startled coworkers behind.

Her heart pounded fiercely as she ran, becoming louder and more distinct. Loraine halted only when the figure at the entrance came into view. She inhaled deeply and walked to him with a collected and steady stride.

Marco was clutching a string in his other hand. Tracking the string, Loraine spotted the biggest balloon inscribed with the words "I love you".

The typically reserved man approached her, gently took her hand with his warm grip, and offered her the string. He carefully wound it around her hand and tugged, bringing the noticeable proclamation of love in the air into their field of view.

Marco gave her an affectionate look, and his voice, no longer coming through a device but from right in front of her, asked, "Loraine, do you appreciate this kind of present?"

Loraine bit her lip when she saw the heads peeking out of the office building and pairs of eager, curious eyes. Although she felt slightly embarrassed by his grand gesture, her heart overflowed with gratitude and happiness.

For the three years of their marriage, Marco had never publicly accepted their relationship. Yet, here he was, offering her the most ardent and heartfelt declaration of love under the bright sun.

Her heart was deeply touched, yet Loraine maintained a composed and dignified facade, her brows slightly knitted.

Observing her reaction, a pang of anxiety hit Marco, and one of his hands formed a tight fist.

He was aware that his grand gesture could potentially interrupt Loraine's workday. His open display of love might feel like an obligation for Loraine to respond.

But he... couldn't afford to let this opportunity slip.

Summoning his courage again, Marco said, "Loraine, I don't expect you to forgive me instantly, or consent to a fresh start or to remarrying me right away... But I hope you would grant me a proper opportunity to pursue you, to make up for my past failures."

Loraine listened in a haze, about to respond when she realized they were surrounded by a gathering crowd.

Many employees stood there, their eyes gleaming with friendly excitement, rooting for them. She spotted Carl maneuvering other balloons, making them dance around them.

Onlookers also assembled, engaging in lively chatter, mostly complimenting the ideal union of the couple.

With her cheeks flushing amidst the cheers, Loraine realized Marco was looking at her with genuine warmth, his face earnest, devoid of any pretense.

He was sincerely proposing a fresh start with her.

Memories of all the happenings post their divorce overwhelmed her. Loraine remembered the transformation in Marco, and his kindness towards her. The biggest obstacle between them was also resolved.

A softening wave overtook Loraine's heart, and she eased her expression amidst the cheering crowd.

A sparkle ignited in Marco's eyes, and in the next moment, Loraine pulled at his hand, signaling him to gather his things and cease creating a spectacle at the entrance of the Universe Group.

Feeling the gentle caress of her hand, Marco grinned, questioning eagerly, "So, you're saying I can pursue you?"

Loraine kept her gaze lowered, remaining silent, but didn't contradict him. She subtly nodded her assent.

Marco was caught off guard and overjoyed. His smile widened and, swept up in the thrill, he drew Loraine into a tight embrace.

Caught by surprise, Loraine instinctively let go of the string. The balloons aloft began to drift apart, and a few popped spontaneously, raining rose petals that landed on their shoulders.

Finally, Loraine softened her stance and returned Marco's embrace.

Thunderous applause erupted around them, and the crowd's cheers echoed in their ears.

Carl, amongst the onlookers, had a satisfied expression on his face.

Hearing the applause, Loraine reddened and reminded herself of their public location. She hastily pushed Marco away, whispering, "If you've nothing better to do, go back to work!"

Carl cleared his throat and stepped forward, aiding Marco with an explanation.

"Miss Torres, Mr. Bryant has invested a great deal of thought into crafting this surprise for you. Moreover, besides this, there's a crucial reason that brought us here."

He added, "The Bryant Group and the Universe Group have officially initiated the White Cloud Airport revamp project. We're planning a celebration to boost morale. Wouldn't it be inspiring for both sides if you and Mr. Bryant could attend together?"

Before Loraine could reply, Marco leaned in and murmured, "I've also arranged a surprise for you."

A surprise?

Loraine's eyebrows twitched as she watched the balloons scattering in the sky. She felt a headache looming. What other

Chapter 556 Celebration

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surprises did Marco have in store?

Where did this man learn all these tricks?



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Chapter 557 The Stellar Galaxy Necklace

After finally seeing Marco off, Loraine couldn't help but ponder on the surprise he had mentioned.

A mixture of worry and inexplicable excitement enveloped her. Standing by the window in her office, she watched Marco's car gradually fade away, an involuntary smile gracing her lips.

In the black Lincoln, Marco smiled endlessly. After sitting for a while, he began to eagerly make plans with Carl.

"What kind of surprise should I prepare for her? Clothes, jewelry? She doesn't lack any of those..."

Carl, realizing that Marco still had much to learn about how to woo a woman, chimed in with a suggestion, "Miss Torres may not lack ordinary jewelry, but you can get her a one-of-a-kind, custom-designed piece! You should consider the work of the renowned jeweler, Laims, who has worldwide acclaim and has even designed jewelry for royal families. Her creations are incredibly rare and difficult to obtain. Acquiring one would undoubtedly demonstrate the depth of your love for Miss Torres!"

Marco's brows eased as he felt an instant sense of relief. Without hesitation, he made a firm decision. "No matter the cost, get one of Laims' designs before the celebration banquet begins. I want Loraine to have nothing but the best!"

Carl agreed with Marco's decision and promptly instructed the driver to head back to the company.



Meanwhile, at the Bryant family's residence, Marina clutched her phone tightly with a distressed expression on her face, sighing repeatedly.

Since issuing the apology statement, she had been feeling gloomy. She couldn't shake the feeling that she had lost face within the circles of the rich families, and that her few friends were avoiding her.

Only Colette stuck by her side, persistently trying to find a way to gain favor with Marco by engaging Marina in conversation about him at every opportunity.

This only served to make Marina grow even more irritated.

With a look of frustration on her face, she slammed her phone down, no longer willing to deal with Colette. Turning to Laura, she voiced her complaints, "Mom, why do we have to help Colette? Marco doesn't like us at all, and now Colette is using us to win his forgiveness. I'm pretty sure he'll be mad at us if he finds out about all this."

Laura cast a disdainful glance at Marina and replied in an annoyed tone, "Can't you see the bigger picture? You're still too young and naive! There's a lot you're yet to learn! Now that Marco has cut us off financially, we have no power in the Bryant family. In such a critical situation, we need to think of ourselves and come up with a plan!"

Pausing for a moment, she continued, "Although the Moreau family is not as powerful as it once was, they still possess some valuable assets. Since Colette is so eager to please us, we might as well make good use of her!"

Marina seemed to understand what Laura was saying, but not entirely. It appeared she had no choice but to continue to engage Colette.



Right at that moment, Colette sent her another message.

Although they were not genuine friends, they knew each other's interests well. Colette, therefore, reached out to her on a topic she knew would intrigue her. "Marina, have you heard about the latest creation by Master Laims, the renowned jeweler? It's called the Stellar Galaxy necklace. It's one limited edition piece that's said to be impossible to buy even with all the money in the world!"

Marina's heart immediately stirred with desire. Although she had a wardrobe filled with luxurious clothes, they were outdated. With her former friends turning their backs on her, it had become increasingly difficult for her to stay updated on the latest trends and exclusive luxury items, which were primarily known and discussed within the upper echelons of society.

As the conversation continued, however, Marina's initial excitement was dampened by a sense of frustration. She couldn't help but express her grievances, saying, "What's the point of knowing about it? It's not like I can afford it. Even if I already knew about it, it would only make me feel worse."

Marina did not dare to ask Liza for money because she was still torturing her and Laura. As for Marco, he wouldn't give her any money.

Colette, unaware of Marina's family situation, kept bringing Marco up in conversation and made determined attempts at flattery, saying, "Although Master Laims' jewelry is hard to come by, it wouldn't be too difficult for the Bryant family to get it. Just give your brother some puppy eyes and he'll definitely buy it for you."

She then continued to entice her further. "Oh and by the way, I heard that Marco is already in talks with Master Laims to acquire it."

Marina's face darkened as she read the message.

She knew that Marco wouldn't buy it for her; it was most likely meant for Loraine.

The mere thought of Marco spending money on Loraine instead of her hurt her to the core. Overcome with jealousy, Marina sought comfort from Laura, pouring out her frustrations with tearful words. "I'll go talk to Grandma! I'll tell her how Marco is recklessly spending money on Loraine! Master Laims' designs are very expensive. How can he buy one for Loraine!"

Seeing that her daughter was in great distress, Laura quickly came up with a clever plan. "Marina, although everyone knows that your brother is planning to buy the necklace at an astronomical price, they don't know that it's for Loraine. Why don't we turn things around by buying a replica of it?"

Marina was puzzled by the suggestion. "A replica? What's the point of buying a fake?"

Laura proceeded to explain the reasoning behind her plan. "Think about it. When you flaunt the replica to your friends, they'll naturally assume that your brother bought the original for you. What would that imply? It would imply that you two have made up! Once people in our circle believe that, they'll fawn over us again, just like before."

Marina's eyes lit up at the prospect. Ever since the scandal, she had been completely isolated from the elite social circles. The thought of regaining her status and connections filled her with excitement, as she nodded eagerly in agreement.

Two days later, the news of the celebration banquet for the finalized White Cloud Airport project, jointly organized by the Bryant Group and the Universe Group, spread like wildfire



throughout Vagow. It became the talk of the town, with every business in town eager to secure an invitation to the event.

After all, being affiliated with the Bryant Group and the Universe Group was a guarantee for success in Vagow.

And the Moreau family was no exception to this.

After much effort, Colette finally managed to secure an invitation, and immediately reached out to Marina, asking her to accompany her to the grand event.

Unbeknownst to her, Marina hadn't received an invitation herself. In spite of this, Marina readily accepted Colette's invitation to be her companion for the evening.

On the night of the banquet, Marina found herself unable to enter without an invitation. She had no choice but to stand by the entrance, anxiously awaiting Colette. When she finally spotted Colette, she plastered a forced smile on her face and hurriedly made her way towards her.

Colette, noticing Marina's odd behavior, couldn't help but ask, "Marina, why aren't you going inside?"



Chapter 558 Pretentiousness

A flicker of tension crossed Marina's face, but then, in a casual motion, she swept her hair aside, revealing an elaborate necklace resting on her collarbone. Flashing a smile, she turned towards Colette and said, "I was holding back until we could enter together, Colette. Remember, we promised to keep each other company? It's been ages since we last got together. We need to spend some quality time tonight!"

Colette stood there, momentarily transfixed by the glimmering necklace that seemed to hold an entire galaxy within.

She had a soft spot for luxurious jewels. Even though the Moreau family wasn't as wealthy as it used to be, she could still admire design craftsmanship through pictures.

So, she immediately recognized the piece. It was none other than the much sought-after "Stellar Galaxy," crafted by the renowned Master Laims.

Was it possible that Marco had inquired about such a precious jewel with the intention of giving it to Marina?

A swift change flickered in Colette's gaze towards Marina, and an affectionate smile appeared on her face. Grasping Marina's arm, she said, "Absolutely, let's proceed."

The banquet that night was a grand affair, attended by almost all the influential figures of Vagow, including a few of Marina's former close friends.

As Marina and Colette made their entrance, several young women of privilege concealed smirks behind their hands.

One, donned in a soft yellow gown, approached Marina, cradling a wine glass, and snickered, "Well, well, look who it is. Our infamous troublemaker, Miss Bryant. Who was foolish enough to invite you? If you cause another scandal, it'll be a tragedy!"

Marina's face drained of color, her eyes welled up, and she shot a venomous glare at the girl, although she didn't dare to retaliate.

The girl's attention then darted to Colette standing next to Marina and burst into a fit of giggles.

"Ah, there's Colette too. You and our hopeless Marina, quite a pair of disasters, aren't you?"

The girls around joined the chorus of mockery. "Has the Moreau family filed for bankruptcy yet, Colette? How could you afford to be at such an event?"

Colette's face turned a shade of crimson, but remembering Marina's presence gave her a slight boost in confidence. With a sneer, she retorted, "Marina is the sister of the CEO of Bryant Group, and I'm her close friend. Why shouldn't we be here?"

Upon hearing Colette's justification, Marina reflexively touched her necklace and lifted her chin high, just as she used to, glancing disdainfully at the gathering.

"Isn't this banquet hosted by the Bryant family? Have you all forgotten my last name? Bella, isn't your father a member of the Bryant Group too? If you continue to slander me, will you still have a place in Vagow?"

Bella Foster, the girl in the yellow gown, froze, her eyes flitting between Marina and the crowd, confusion and fear battling in her gaze. The other girls, who had previously laughed at Marina's presence, fell silent. Some even considered reconciling

with Marina.

Marina seemed to have a newfound confidence about her.

However, Bella stretched her hand to stop a girl from approaching Marina, her face filled with disdain. "Who do you think you're fooling, Marina? Sure, the Bryant Group is powerful, but what does that have to do with you? Everyone knows the stupid things you've done. Even though you share the Bryant name, the actual power rests with Marco! You're nothing more than an embarrassment!"

Upon hearing Bella's words, a few individuals in the room hesitated. Bella continued to taunt Marina, saying, "Marina, you've been constantly disrespecting Loraine. Marco must be tired of you! I don't think you hold any position in the Bryant family. If you did, why hasn't Marco intervened to protect you despite all the trouble you've caused?"

Those opportunists who had been influenced by the situation earlier quietly stepped back. The general sentiment among those present was that Bella's accusations had some validity. Marina was seen as a troublemaker and someone not worthy of seeking approval from.

As the contemptuous glances resumed, Marina felt her anger surge and blurted, "You have no right to belittle me!"

Colette, standing beside Marina, felt a twinge of agreement with Bella. Marina's arrogance was distasteful, but considering her own plan of getting close to Marco through Marina, she had to swallow her disgust. She put on a look of regret and sighed, "I'm surprised that you all claim to be socialites, yet you fail to recognize the jewel Marina is wearing."

At Colette's comment, Marina instinctively lifted her chest, showing off the sparkling necklace.

A gasp of recognition went through the crowd. "Isn't that the Stellar Galaxy crafted by Master Laims? It's a limited edition worldwide, and there's only one like this. How did Marina acquire it?"

Colette stood a bit taller, a smug look on her face, as if she were the one wearing the necklace. She turned to the crowd, her expression even more haughty than before, and declared, "Marco bought this necklace for Marina, at quite a price!"



Chapter 559 Genuine Edition

After Colette finished speaking, there was a brief silence.

The people all looked at each other in astonishment and confusion.

This was a masterpiece that no ordinary person could buy. It was the only one of its kind in the entire world!

Had it not been said everywhere that Marco had severed ties with the Bryant family? So, why would he still buy such a valuable luxury item for Marina?

Seeing the expressions on the faces of the people, Colette felt satisfied and she continued, "During this time, Marco sent people all around to scour for luxury jewelry. I believe you all heard about it, right? But what you didn't know was that he was actually looking for a gift to buy for Marina!"

Bella's eyes widened in disbelief when she heard this. Colette noticed this and further emphasized her point, "Yes, Marina made a little mistake that upset Lorraine, but Marina and Marco are family, you know. How can there be permanent grudges between close family members? I can assure you, they've already reconciled! This necklace is the gift Marco bought to make amends for what happened between them."

The more she spoke, the more she exaggerated. "In fact," she added, "Marco even paid a lot of money to Master Laims to make a specially designed necklace for Marina. But Master offered to sell this necklace, which is very unique and unmatched all over the world, and now, it's around Marina's neck!"



At this point, the people present began to whisper to one another again, but the look they gave Marina had now changed.

If this was true, didn't it mean that Marco had forgiven Marina after she admitted her mistake?

As a result, since she was the only daughter of the Bryant family, if she was maltreated, she would simply complain to Marco and those who offended her would have a hard time in Vagow from then onwards and might even be blacklisted!

Marina herself couldn't help but feel a little guilty as she listened to Colette's continued exaggerations. But when she saw the envious looks from the crowd focused on her and heard the flattery coming from so many lips, she began to feel elated.

She even started to make herself believe Colette's statement that the necklace on her neck was personally purchased by Marco at a very high price.

She assumed a confident and proud posture in order to better show off the necklace. Under the dim and hazy light of the banquet hall, the diamonds emitted a dazzling brilliance, and the eyes of the elites in attendance were filled with envy.

With Colette's words and Marina's confident and proud attitude, the previously hesitant elites now believed the story and they gathered around Marina, as if nothing had happened and they were still her good friends.

Compliments poured out from their mouths endlessly and Marina smiled triumphantly and gave Bella a meaning look just to provoke her further.

Actually, she had known Bella for a long time, but they had never really dealt with each other. Bella's father was one of the





shareholders at Bryant Group, but he gave her no respect even though she was the only daughter of the Bryant family. When she was still on good terms with Marco, it was tolerable. But after Marco stopped caring about her, Bella began to mock her whenever she had the chance.

Now, seeing Bella's face turn pale after being shut down by Colette's words, Marina couldn't help but feel very happy and satisfied.

Before long, her behavior made Bella so angry that she stomped her foot and cursed under her breath. She was clearly frustrated with the success of someone as petty as Marina.

She just couldn't stand her smugness and she began to think of how to ruin it. Suddenly, a thought entered her head and she quickly spoke up. "Marina, is that necklace real?"

Marina stiffened and her eyes went red with anger. "What do you mean by that?" she barked. "Bella, even if you're green with envy, you shouldn't be saying such a thing!"

But Bella sneered disdainfully, "Why are you so worked up? Just make us understand a simple fact. Everyone knows that Marco has been trying to please Loraine, and you have repeatedly offended her. So, how can he make peace with you and give you such a necklace?"

Marina, since she had been flattered by so many people in the crowd, had become so full of herself that she felt almost indestructible. Sneering mockingly, she retorted, "My brother and Loraine are divorced. She is now an outsider to the Bryant family. How can you compare an outsider to me, his sister? If she's not an outsider, then why didn't he buy such a precious necklace for her too?"

The crowd found sense in what Marina said and they advised Bella not to be petty. But almost at the same time, the venue



suddenly fell silent.

Marina noticed that everyone had turned their heads towards the entrance, and she quickly did the same. But what she saw made her mouth hang open in surprise. The confident smile on her face vanished completely.

It was Loraine, her long hair tied up, her makeup exquisite, and a faint smile on her lips. She looked very elegant and graceful, her slender and delicate neck adorned with sparkling jewels. But all the jewelry paled in comparison to her beauty.


The first thing everyone saw was her stunning beauty and her elegant and noble demeanor.

She walked into the venue, slightly lifting the hem of her dress, and the people who had recovered their senses greeted her with smiles, to which she responded gracefully.

Some of the people began to whisper to each other, "Both of them are from prestigious families, but Loraine is much more pleasing to the eye than that arrogant and domineering one."

Suddenly, Loraine paused and turned towards the direction of these people. As she got closer, everyone still had their eyes glued to her. But Bella had her eyes somewhere else. When she saw the necklace on Loraine's neck, she exclaimed, "It's the Stellar Galaxy! The dazzling Stellar Galaxy designed by Master Laims!"



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Chapter 560 Comparison

Upon hearing Bella's surprised outcry, all eyes in the room swiftly shifted to the necklace adorning Loraine's neck.

Like a glittering gem nestled in the snow, the necklace didn't merely augment Loraine's grace, it also resonated harmoniously with her nobility.

The crowd's attention suddenly shifted to Marina. The necklace around her neck was exactly the same as Loraine's.

To deem them identical would be to belittle the majesty of the Stellar Galaxy. A closer comparison revealed that Marina's necklace diamonds were inferior versions, their radiance underwhelming under the illumination. Meanwhile, Loraine's necklace sparkled brilliantly, mirroring the truly magnificent galaxy.

This comparison left no doubt in anyone's mind about which was the original, and which was the counterfeit. Contemptuous stares fell upon Marina, her deceit laid bare.

Marina's complexion drained of color, and she swayed unsteadily.

She had never anticipated Loraine's presence at such a small celebration dinner, let alone that she would be wearing that necklace!

Marina's gaze fell to her own necklace, and then drifted to Loraine's. Envy surged within her as she imagined Marco buying and gifting the necklace to Loraine.

Colette found herself most flabbergasted in the room. Her previous boastful comments felt like a resounding slap to her own face, each word returning to haunt her.

Colette's expression contorted in fury as she turned to Marina and demanded, "Marina, what's the meaning of this?"

Feeling the scrutinizing gazes from everyone in the room, Marina was on edge. She retorted defensively, "Lorraine's necklace is a sham, mine is the authentic one!"

In reality, Lorraine had just happened to be walking by and noticed the gathering around Marina. Initially, she had intended to ignore it and move along, but then she heard someone pointing in her direction while speaking. Intrigued, she decided to pause and see what the fuss was about.

After hearing the intense discussion and Marina's assertive statement, Lorraine swiftly understood the situation.

She cast a mischievous glance at Marina, her eyes alight with amusement.

When Lorraine received the gift from Marco, she didn't actually want it. Master Laims' designs, though renowned, were beyond her spending preference.

Yet Marco insisted she accept the gift, and Lorraine did not wish to offend him by declining.

Marco's gift was meticulously wrapped and securely sealed, accompanied by certification papers for the jewelry and the exclusive signature of Master Laims on her design. Meanwhile, Marina claimed Lorraine's gift to be a counterfeit and caused a commotion, behaving like an ignorant, bold clown, which was quite amusing.

Considering all this, Loraine confidently advanced towards Marina, who started to recede, her face pale.

As she drew near, Loraine noticed the necklace that Marina was wearing, and simply chuckled while shaking her head.

While the design of the necklace closely imitated the original, the inferior quality of the material and craftsmanship was evident to Loraine. Not to mention, the diamonds were of a significantly lesser quality. Marina's audacity to pass off such a cheap knockoff as high-end jewelry showed her disregard for the Bryant family's reputation.

With composure and grace, Loraine stated, "From my perspective, it appears Marina is the one adorned with the imitation."

Marina's lips quivered, unable to muster a rebuttal.

Observing Loraine's serene and composed demeanor, Colette felt an intense wave of resentment.

Not again! Why did Loraine always carry this air of indifference, as though she's above everything else?

If it weren't for Loraine, the Moreau family would not be in their current predicament, and she wouldn't be subjected to such humiliation, scorned by these fickle trend-followers.

Blinded by fury and bitterness, Colette didn't hear a word of Loraine's comments. She retorted, "Loraine, you're lying!"

Loraine met her gaze patiently, as though waiting for Colette to state her reasons. The room held its breath, sensing the mounting tension.

Colette took a deep breath, and asserted with conviction,



"Marina's necklace was a gift from Marco, how could it possibly be a fake?"

As Colette spoke, Marina's face blanched with terror and disbelief.

Laura had reiterated numerous times when she handed the necklace to Marina. This issue must remain away from Marco's ears. If he caught wind of it, he'd personally handle the situation with strict discipline.

Revealing this to Loraine now was tantamount to disclosing it directly to Marco. And Marina absolutely did not want to cross paths with Loraine now!

Marina immediately regretted agreeing to Colette's invitation. She shot a nervous glance at Loraine and swiftly sidled up to Colette, whispering urgently, "Let's drop this. After all, today is a celebration of our companies' collaboration. Let's not argue with Loraine..."

Marina glanced at the audience and leaned closer to whisper to Colette, "Let's not divulge this and keep it our secret. After all, it wouldn't be suitable to expose Loraine, the respected CEO of Universe Group, for wearing counterfeit goods, right? It could potentially jeopardize our future collaborations."

Colette, however, rebuffed Marina and roared in indignation, "Why should I stay silent about this woman flaunting fake goods?"



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