

Chapter 770 Seek Your Own Happiness

Cayson's parents were held in high regard by Aldo, and both families had a deep and longstanding friendship. Cayson had even stepped in to take charge of Universe Group during Loraine's absence for several years. Hence, Aldo saw him as a favored and promising young heir of his family's business.

So, when he heard that Cayson had arrived, Aldo was delighted. "You mean Cayson is here? Come on, let him in!" he ordered the butler.

Soon, Cayson's gentle and clear laughter could be heard as he appeared at the doorway. "Mr. Torres, a very good morning to you, sir," he greeted with a polite smile with a gift in his hands.

Aldo didn't rise from his seat. Instead, he gestured warmly for him to come to the table. "Cayson, come join us for breakfast. You're always too courteous, talking about apologizing and bringing gifts."

Cayson approached the table with a smile, but when he noticed the man sitting right next to Loraine, his face froze.

He stood there motionless as he stared at Marco. Aldo, sensing the sudden tension, was left confused. But when he looked at Loraine and Marco, what was going on became clear to him.

He had briefly forgotten that Cayson also had feelings for Loraine just like Marco did.

Nevertheless, Cayson, known for his exceptional manners, was

quick to recover from his initial shock. He forced a smile to his face and addressed Loraine, making sure to ignore Marco, "Lorrie, I recently heard that you've returned. Apart from visiting your grandpa, I also came to see you."

Loraine had intended to tell her grandpa to go out to meet Cayson, but everything had happened too fast. Now, the best she could do was greet Cayson with a forced smile. "Hi, Cayson. If you and Grandpa have something to discuss, I'll excuse myself," she offered.

With that, she grabbed Marco's hand with the intention of making a quick exit from this awkward situation.

Cayson's eyes darkened when he saw her take Marco's hand. Unable to contain his frustration, he challenged his rival in a cold tone, "Marco, why are you here? How can you have the audacity to show up here?"

As soon as Cayson said this, a heavy silence enveloped the hall. Aldo wanted to explain Marco's presence, but he suddenly found himself at a loss for words.

Amid this uncomfortable silence, Marco tightened his grip on Loraine's hand and calmly turned to face Cayson. "Of course, I'm here with the consent of the host. It was Mr. Torres who personally invited me to stay," he said in a composed tone.

Cayson refused to believe this. Instead, he retorted through gritted teeth, "Nonsense! After what you've done to Lorrie, how could Mr. Torres possibly invite you?"

Then he turned to Aldo with desperation in his eyes. "Mr. Torres, you couldn't have possibly invited him... right?"

Aldo couldn't help but rub his temples and let out a long sigh.

The current situation was, in a way, a result of his own actions.

The two families had a deep and longstanding friendship, and he knew Cayson very well. He was not only a highly capable young man but also an excellent one. Aldo used to harbour thoughts of matching Cayson and Loraine, especially after Loraine divorced Marco.

But unfortunately, Loraine had always seen Cayson merely as an older brother. Hence, there were no romantic sparks between them, at least not from Loraine's end. Now that Loraine had reconciled with Marco, the situation had gotten even more hopeless.

As a result, Aldo had since abandoned his matchmaking plans.

He could clearly see that Loraine was like a young girl in love when she was with Marco. But with Cayson, the relationship was more akin to colleagues at work who had the same career goals.

Frankly, Cayson's affection for Loraine was something that Aldo himself had fueled and encouraged.

So, this situation shouldn't be Loraine's burden to bear alone. It was time for him to step in and resolve it once and for all.

With a solemn and silent gesture, Aldo signaled for Loraine to leave with Marco. "Lorrie, after breakfast, make sure you take Marco to his room. You know he has difficulty moving," he instructed.

Understanding her grandfather's intentions, Loraine nodded and promptly left with Marco.

Cayson watched in silence as they went, but his fists were clenched and his eyes welled with emotion. He glanced at Aldo several times, wanting to speak his mind to the old man, but each time, he was able to hold back his anger. Finally, he



managed to compose himself, and he asked him in a subdued tone, "Mr. Torres, why?"

From what had just happened right before his eyes, it was clear to Cayson that Marco had come to the house with Aldo's consent.

Cayson just wanted to know why. Despite his efforts to control his emotions, his internal turmoil was evident. "For crying out loud, sir, after what Marco did to Lorrie, how could you possibly invite him?" he added.

Aldo fell into a thoughtful silence for a moment. Then he let out a gentle sigh. "Love is a matter of the heart, my boy," he said in a kindly tone. "I believe that when it comes to matters of the heart, Lorrie can handle such things by herself."

Not wanting to sound too blunt, Aldo continued in a benevolent tone, "I know all of this is as a result of my mistake. Matters of the heart are something that others should not meddle in. Even though I'm Lorrie's grandfather, there's a limit to what I can do in such matters. I realize now that my attempt to be a matchmaker between you and Lorrie was misguided. Please, Cayson, don't waste your efforts on Lorrie anymore. Go and seek your own happiness."



Chapter 771 Persuasion

Aldo's expression remained calm and composed, but his tone held a certain firmness.

Cayson stared at Aldo in shock and disbelief. He attempted smiling but failed miserably. "W-What did you say? I couldn't quite hear you," he managed to choke out after a moment of silence.

For the longest time, he had believed that he was a step higher than Marco because he had the Torres family on his side. But everything was being ruined now. Aldo had given Marco the approval to stay in the Torres family home. Cayson had never even been allowed to sleep there.

Aldo turned to Cayson. "Cayson, you have amazing talents. You're able to do so many things. What you deserve is a woman who is going to love you with her whole heart. Forget about Lorrie. Live your life for yourself, not for me."

Cayson clenched his fists tightly, his expression souring. "I wasn't acting. Or pretending because of you... I actually loved her."

He remembered when they were younger. She was so timid and quiet then, but with time she became mischievous and confident. It was absolutely adorable.

Cayson smiled softly. "Rest assured, I don't love her just because of you... My love for her is pure and genuine."

Aldo became more conflicted. That revelation didn't make him feel better at all. He sighed in defeat. "You can't force the heart

to love. Lorrie's wishes must be respected."

Cayson stayed quiet as Aldo continued, "She's gone through a lot and I really owe her. How will I be able to stand face to face with her parents when I join them in heaven if I force things on her? You have a good heart, Cayson. You know Lorrie only sees you as a brother. You can't force her to love you."

Cayson scowled in anger. He couldn't hold his thoughts back anymore. "She followed her 'heart', married Marco and look how much she suffered! Nothing is going to change. We can't let her experience any of that again. It's not like this isn't for her own good! She can't decide for herself!"

How did the situation turn out like this? Aldo had tried to be gentle and calm. How did this conversation go so wrong? Aldo furrowed his brows in dissatisfaction.

To be fair, he had also considered the things Cayson was talking about. Loraine was his granddaughter after all. He cared for her feelings.

"Things have changed. Marco wouldn't dare to distress her again. He's lost everything and he's even planning to marry into the Torres family!"

Cayson's eyes widened in shock. He would marry into the family? Aldo had been thinking about their remarriage already?

Cayson clenched his jaw tightly. His hatred towards Marco doubled. He suspected that Marco was probably just planning to marry her so he could live off of her wealth. "Fine! I'll marry into the Torres family as well!"

Aldo was stunned for a brief second but soon brushed Cayson's bold declaration off. Cayson might be willing to sacrifice everything for her, but he wasn't Marco. Unlike Marco, he still had a life he would be throwing away if he acted rashly.

Aldo gave Cayson a small smile. "Are your parents aware of your plans?"

Cayson felt the lump as it formed in his throat. His face turned pale. Why didn't he think of that? Yes, it'd be wonderful to marry Loraine, but he was an only child and his parents would definitely not let him marry into her family.

Aldo let out a small sigh. "I really do hope you fall in love with someone who'd love you just as much... You're a good person. I'll always see you as a member of my family."

Cayson could barely make out Aldo's words; everything was blurring together. He could barely see and hear. He soon snapped out of the trance. His body trembled lightly and he made up an excuse to leave.

Thinking that he just needed some space, Aldo didn't try to stop him or go after him.

Cayson speedily walked away from the estate, only slowing down once he was out. He turned around. No one was really going after him.

Loraine was most likely in her room enjoying her time with Marco... while he was left out here alone.

Determined, Cayson decided that he was going to win her heart no matter what.



Chapter 772 Bankruptcy

After Cayson's departure, the atmosphere in the Torres family home remained relatively calm and peaceful, with no significant disturbances. But in the outside world, the story was different. Especially for Bryant Group, which had previously faced a series of scandals and was now dealing with a number of both internal and external troubles.

A few days ago, a trending post online claiming that Bryant Group was facing bankruptcy and liquidation had been created as part of a plot to frame Loraine. But this scheme quickly backfired, and the claim contained in the post became reality.

The stock price of Bryant Group collapsed completely.

A group of public officials arrived at Bryant Group's main building and swiftly sealed off the company's premises, marking the company's official declaration of bankruptcy.

Some employees stood at the entrance, bewildered and with nowhere to go. Others who had left the company earlier felt relieved that they had jumped ship at the right time. The once-mighty Bryant Group, which was once a leader in Vagow, had now fallen, and this fall was causing quite a stir in the city and beyond.

Those in the know had also heard that the majority shareholder of the Group who was also the true owner, Liza, had fallen critically ill due to the disgrace the family had faced, and her life now hung in the balance. The only person with the authority to act in the corporation, the second-largest shareholder, Jefferson, had still not made a public appearance.

There were rumors that after Bryant Group's downfall, Jefferson had disappeared with the company's assets.

When Jefferson's creditors heard this story, they were not pleased at all. Some of them were ruthless loan sharks and they went with their henchmen to visit Jefferson's residence.

The Foster family lived in a wealthy neighborhood in the city. The imposing front gate was forcibly smashed open by his creditors and Jefferson, who was rumored to have disappeared with the company's assets, was dragged out and severely beaten.

A steel pipe was pressed against his neck, and a debt collector with a scarred face stood on his belly, speaking menacingly to him. "Heard you were planning to run, huh? You don't want to repay your debts?"

By now, Jefferson's face was badly swollen, and his nose was bleeding. There was a mix of mucus and tears running down his face. "No, Toreno," he whimpered, "it's all a misunderstanding. I didn't intend to run. I'll repay the money, I promise!"

But Toreno Diaz was in no mood to listen to promises. "Where's the money?" he demanded angrily, his eyes blazing with fury.

"I... I can't liquidate my assets right now. Please just give me some time... Oh, spare my life, please spare me, please!" Jefferson screamed in pain as one of the other debt collectors stepped on his hand and ground it on the concrete pavement.

A mocking laughter erupted from the crowd, and someone spat at Jefferson angrily, "Bryant Group has gone bankrupt, and you think you can get away just like that? Pay up now, or we'll chop off your limbs as collateral for our money!"

Jefferson was both shocked and terrified. He used to consider himself a person of high standing, and never had he experienced such a dire situation before. After enduring so much beating, he had now lost all his resolve, so he crawled to the feet of Toreno like a beaten dog and clutched his thigh, pleading, "Frankly, I can't produce the money right now. But I beg you, don't cut off my limbs. I still have a daughter! She's in her prime... she's a beautiful girl. Please, if it comes to that, I can give her to you to offset the debts. And if that's not enough, I can even give you my wife!"

He wiped away his tears and snot, making him look even more pathetic and desperate, and then continued muttering like a madman, "This debt is a shared one within the marriage, so my wife has an obligation to help repay it!"

But Toreno gave him a disdainful look and cursed him as a spineless waste. Since he had now realized that Jefferson really couldn't produce the money, he made a call to his superior.

Jefferson watched him with hope in his eyes as Toreno talked with his boss on the phone, but as Toreno's facial expression grew increasingly grim, Jefferson's anticipation quickly turned to dread. After the call ended, Toreno didn't utter a word. Instead, he delivered a swift and powerful slap that sent two of Jefferson's teeth flying out of his mouth.

Jefferson was bamboozled by the sudden slap and began to mutter incomprehensible words as he covered his mouth with his hands. But Toreno didn't care. Instead, he grabbed Jefferson's collar and gave him another round of merciless beating. Then he spat on the ground and barked at him, "You old dog, you're purposely trying to trap us, aren't you? Your wife and daughter have already sued you for misappropriating shared assets. Going to find them would only land us in trouble with the police! You not only refuse to repay the money, you

also want to set us up in order to involve the police, huh?"

With that, he threw a fresh flurry of punches, leaving Jefferson heavily battered and crying out in pain.

After a while, Toreno got tired of beating him and just tossed him aside. Suddenly, he smirked and said, "If you can't repay the money, how about those organs of yours? Can they fetch a good price? Come on, take him away!"

As Toreno's men stepped forward to carry him, Jefferson, with wide, terrified eyes, struggled desperately, but he was powerless against them. Eventually, they knocked him unconscious and carried him away.

Meanwhile, the Bryant family villa was also being sealed as a result of Bryant Group's bankruptcy. Laura and her daughter were unceremoniously kicked out of the villa first before it was sealed.

This time was far worse than when they were expelled by the old lady. Tears welled up in Marina's eyes as she watched the government officials moving their belongings outside. "Mom, what are we going to do now?" she asked in despair.

Laura gritted her teeth, her eyes filled with determination. "There's no other choice. Let's go to the hospital and find the old woman! There must be some private assets she's hoarding. If we can get our hands on those, we can still live a good life!" she assured her daughter.



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Chapter 773 Private Assets

The only illumination in the dark hospital room came from the screens of the various life-supporting devices that were connected to the patient. Apart from these machines, the room was just stark and desolate, and on the bed lay a frail and withered old lady.

In the adjacent room, there seemed to be the sound of joyful laughter of children – an indication that the room was bustling with activity.

In stark contrast to the joyful sounds coming from the next room, the elderly lady looked weak and sad as she slowly opened her eyes. Her gaze was clouded and almost lifeless, and a respirator supported her faint breath, which left a thin layer of white mist that dissipated with each exhale.

This elderly lady that was now suffering in her twilight years was none other than the once great Liza of the Bryant family.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she began to remember the events leading up to her current condition.

Never did she expect that of all the many people she knew, the one who would ultimately extend a helping hand and send her to the hospital would be Loraine.

Throughout her life, Liza had been strong-willed and dominant, always uncompromising in her decisions. She had nurtured an heir who surpassed even the most talented scions of highly prestigious families in the country. Hence, her life should have ended in fulfillment and success.

But who could have predicted the predicament she now found herself in? Nobody saw it coming.

Frankly, it was the bitter fruit of her own action – the decision to drive away Marco – that led to her downfall.

Her weak, withered fingers were connected to various life-supporting devices, making it challenging to move her hand even slightly. She knew that Loraine had done enough by having her brought to the hospital, so she expected that there would be no further care.

The once dominant old lady's eyes welled up with tears as she finally felt endless regret.

If only she hadn't driven Marco away back then, Bryant Group would never have gone bankrupt.

If Marco had remained as the CEO, she was sure that she wouldn't have ended up in a hospital with no one to look after her.

Though Marco appeared aloof on the outside, he was, in fact, someone who was capable of caring deeply for others – a far cry from the cold-hearted Laura and Marina who had now abandoned her.

While the remorseful old lady was lost in her thoughts, the door was suddenly pushed open.

With great effort, Liza shifted her gaze towards the door and she was astonished to see Laura and Marina entering the hospital room.

Her eyes brightened up immediately. It seemed the mother and daughter still had some conscience left. After all, they were her family, and she had repeatedly sheltered and assisted them

through many years.

At this point, Laura carefully closed the door and approached Liza's bedside along with Marina. When she saw that the elderly lady was awake, a smile of relief appeared on her face and she said, "Mother, it's wonderful that you're awake. I thought we'd have to wait a while."

Liza managed a faint smile and tried to move her lips in an effort to say a few heartwarming words.

But Laura was too impatient to let her speak. Instead, she quickly rushed to the point of their visit. "Mother, since you're awake, this will be easy. Now, where are your private assets? Hand them over to us right now!"

Instantly, Liza's smile faded and her heart sank.

She now understood why these two had come to see her. They weren't here to care for her but to take her private assets!

Fueled by anger, she found some renewed strength, and her chest heaved as she managed to mumble a few words through her trembling lips. "Wicked woman! I've been in the hospital for so long, and neither of you cared to visit me. Now that you've finally shown up, you want to take my private assets!"

Laura's expression turned colder, but she maintained a fake smile on her face as she replied, "Mother, please don't get agitated. There were so many things happening out there, that's why we couldn't make it earlier. I hope you understand."

She paused a bit and then tried to assume a façade of concern for Liza. "Furthermore, we don't need this money for ourselves alone. You've been in the hospital for a long time and even had surgery – all of this requires money. I'm currently out of funds, but if you want to stay alive, we need to pay money to the hospital, don't we?"

Liza, astute as she was, glared at her coldly and retorted, "Fetch the doctor right now. I want to ask him if the money that was paid for my hospitalization has run out!"

Seeing that she couldn't deceive the old lady, Laura abandoned her pretense and adopted a cold demeanor. "Liza, what's the use of holding onto your money at this point, eh? Why not just give us your private assets? My daughter and I will take care of you during your final days," she stated haughtily.

The last sentence struck a chord in the old lady's heart. She had been in hospital for several days now, constantly fearing that there would be no one to take care of her. Even if she died, no one would claim her remains.

But now, Marina, her biological granddaughter – the only lifeline she could grasp – had come to see her.

But she was also well aware of the nature of this mother-daughter duo. Yet, her choices were very minimal. Weakened and frustrated, she said to Laura, "How can I trust what you're saying? If you want my private assets, you need to take care of me first."

Laura felt that since the old lady was nearing the end of her life, it might be more effective to cater to her needs for a while and coax her into willingly handing over her inheritance.

So she promptly agreed with the idea. "Mother, rest assured. We're family, and I'll take good care of you," she vowed to Liza.

Over the next few days, Laura made genuine efforts to serve the old lady. She fulfilled her every demand, no matter how bothersome it was, and even assisted with her personal hygiene, regardless of whether or not others were present.

But Marina, on the other hand, couldn't endure it for more than

two days. On the third day, she asked Liza angrily, "Grandma, how long do you expect us to serve you? Can't we just hire a caregiver for you?"

Liza, half-dozing and half-awake, involuntarily mumbled her true thoughts, "Allow you to serve me until the day I die so you can inherit my money? Impossible! I won't let you two wastrels have my money!"

Marina's eyes widened as she realized that she and her mother had been deceived. She let out a sharp scream and angrily pushed Liza off the hospital bed.

The old woman let out a feeble cry for help, leaving Marina startled and panicked. Marina hadn't deliberately intended to cause her any harm. She certainly didn't want to be guilty of murder!



Chapter 774 Greed

The cables of the medical equipment that had been roughly disconnected as a result of the push lay on the bed. Even the needles that were in the old lady's hand had been pulled out in the process. Liza was already on her last breath and couldn't now possibly get up on her own. Her cries for help were now growing weaker and weaker by the minute.

Marina stood there frozen in fear, feeling utterly helpless.

It was at this critical moment that Laura entered the room.

Marina was glad to finally see her anchor and she grabbed her hand anxiously. "Mom, what should we do? I..."

But Laura, without even glancing at the fallen old lady on the floor, patted her daughter's hand reassuringly and said, "Don't be scared. This old hag is truly despicable. Even though she's practically on her deathbed, she still dared to deceive us. Since she won't give us the money, there's no need for us to treat her kindly anymore!"

When Liza heard this, she turned pale and began to tremble with anger. "Wicked woman, what... what are you planning?" she managed to squeak.

Laura approached her with a stern look on her face, looking down at her as if she was a dead person.

Liza, who was accustomed to being dominant, would never submit to her daughter-in-law whom she had dominated for years. Instead, she seethed, "You vixen, the money is in my hands, and I can give it to whomever I please. If you won't take

care of me, then I'll hire a caregiver!"

But Laura sneered at her, "Mom, do you still think of yourself as the high and mighty Mrs. Bryant? Right now, you're nothing more than a rich, dying old lady! Even if you hire a caregiver, they won't be devoted to you at all. They would only insult and mistreat you behind closed doors, and what would you do about it?"

Liza's face turned pale. She nearly suffered a heart attack as she listened to Laura. She had to admit that what Laura had said was the truth.

If even her biological granddaughter and daughter-in-law could treat her this way, why wouldn't a stranger do worse?

Sensing that the old lady's spirit was beginning to weaken, Laura decided to use even more firmness and persuasion to convince her. "Mom, don't waste your efforts. We are your only family. After you pass away, won't the money still be ours? Just hand it over now, so you can still enjoy a few good days with our care," she urged.

When Liza heard this, her teeth couldn't stop chattering, and she glared fiercely at Laura. "You... you think I don't know what you're up to?" she scoffed. "If I give you the money, you won't care anymore whether I live or die."

At least, with the money still in her own possession, she could make Laura pretend to care for her for a few more days. But if she handed it over, she doubted if Laura would even pay her hospital bills.

Laura wasn't very happy with this response. Her expression darkened in anger and she spoke sternly to Liza. "Don't force me to get tough. Tell me, where's the damn money?"

Liza, who was infuriated, quivered with anger and kept cursing

her, "Wretched... wretched woman. It's all your doing. You caused the downfall of Bryant Group! I won't give you a single penny!"

Having held her patience for so long, Laura's temper finally snapped. With a malevolent expression on her face, she threatened her mother-in-law, "Since you've refused to cooperate, I'll take extreme measures. I've tolerated enough of your nonsense!"

Then she turned to Marina and ordered her, "Marina, guard the door!"

Marina was startled by her mother's wild facial expression and she couldn't help but hesitate. "Mom, what are you planning to do?" she asked.

But Laura retorted, "You'd better do as you're told. Since this old hag doesn't seem to understand her place, I'll make sure she learns!"

These were the words that Liza usually uttered whenever she was reprimanding them. But now, the tables had turned, and it was Laura who was now using them against Liza.

Laura felt a sense of lightness, as if she had released decades of pent-up resentment.

Liza, on the other hand, was filled with fear and anxiety. "Marina, don't go!" she called after her granddaughter.

But this only reminded Marina of those days when Liza used to bully her.

Since the situation was now reversed, and Liza was still daring to order her, Marina felt a surge of anger. Without hesitation, she marched out of the room and locked the door.

Soon after, she began to hear panicked and agonized moans from Liza, accompanied by muffled sounds that hinted at some distressing event.

As Marina heard all these, her face turned pale. She knew Laura must be taking drastic action against the old woman.

She was scared that things might escalate into a tragedy, and if Liza, a terminally ill patient, got killed in the process, they would both end up in jail for murder.

She began to contemplate whether or not she should intervene to stop Laura. But just as she was about to make a decision, the door to the hospital room was opened from the inside, revealing Laura with a pleased expression on her face. "It's done," she said with a triumphant smile. "I've found out where the old hag is hiding her assets."

When Marina heard this good news, her previous worries and fears vanished in an instant. "Really?" she exclaimed in joy. "Then let's go and retrieve it! Mom, once we have the money, we can finally leave Vagow, find a place where no one knows us, and start afresh. We'll definitely live a better life!"

Laura nodded in agreement. She had the exact same desire as her daughter.

Without paying any further attention to Liza, the two of them rushed to the location the old lady had revealed under duress. But when they tried to access the money, they were informed by the lawyer that only Liza herself could withdraw the funds. The only alternative was that they would have to wait until her death for it to be considered part of the inheritance.

