

Chapter 852 Saving A Girl

The girl who had put Loraine through so much trouble was still in the bar. Ariadna poked her head out from where she was hiding to see what was going on.

The men who had harassed her had been dealt with, and the figure now standing in front of her looked strong and fearless.

Ariadna's eyes lit up in gratitude as she looked up at her savior. She felt his unruly hair made him look really handsome.

This was not the first time that the bartender had done such a thing in this bar. The manager of the bar was his relative, so he never had to worry about losing his job. He often played with a group of hooligans. Whenever they encountered innocent or vulnerable girls in the bar, they would flirt with them and even molest them.

Since the owner of the bar had strong connections, the girls that were molested dared not fight back in any way. This was the first time someone had fought and defeated them.

The bartender cleaned the blood from his nose and staggered up to his feet. Even though his vision was still clouded, he cursed angrily, "Damn you! Where did this bastard even come from? I'll beat both of you together!"

Then with a mad rush, he attempted to carry out another attack. But his fist was easily grabbed.

With his red hair and leather jacket, the man he wanted to fight was as tall as a wall. He looked like someone out of a women's magazine, with thick eyebrows, big eyes and a perfect nose.

Picking up the bartender, he threw him to one side and growled at him, "Are you out of your mind? How dare you try to hit me again?"

This throw only angered the bartender even more. He felt ashamed that he was picked up so easily, and he shouted to his men, "Guys, come with me. Let's kill him!"

At this point, one of the hooligans who had been drenched with wine had just finished rubbing his eyes clean. When he finally opened his eyes and saw who their attacker was, he fell to his knees and trembled with fear. "Mr. Lee, y... you're here?"

By now, the hooligan's eyes had cleared sufficiently. He looked at the man again, and this time, he recognized him as none other than the well-known Slater Lee!

When the bartender heard what his fellow hooligan said, he was taken aback. Immediately, his legs gave way and he fell to the floor in a heap.

Never in his life would he have thought that someone like Slater would go to a bar alone in the daytime and intervene in such an issue.

At this moment, Slater was already walking towards the bartender with his hands behind his back. With a light kick, he pushed the bartender's chin up. "I think I remember you. Is that manager your uncle?" he asked.

The bartender's face turned deathly pale and he cried out, "Mr. Lee... Mr. Lee, I was so blinded by my stupidity that I couldn't recognize you. I'm so sorry. Please let me go. I'm begging you."

Slater chuckled. He had never been a nice-tempered person. This was a well-known fact in the upper class. And everyone in the upper class knew that he had a strong aversion to using

force against girls and detested witnessing such behavior from others.

Now, these scumbags had made the mistake of attacking him. Slater was being triggered by the events in his life. He had never been in love and neither could he find a female companion.

This made him angry and depressed. He had gone through his list of friends earlier in the day, only to find that they were either in his blacklist or they had blacklisted him. He really had no one that could accompany him to a banquet!

Angry at his situation, he had come out alone to drown his sorrows in wine.

Coincidentally, he encountered these scumbags when they were trying to force themselves on the little girl.

With a fierce smile on his face, he bent down and patted the bartender's rigid face. "Let you go?" he said with an evil chuckle. "Why didn't you let the girl go, huh? Why did you keep bullying her? I won't let you go. I'll kill you!"

The bartender wailed in terror. The manager of the bar, having gotten news of what was going on, ran to the bar and went down on his knees before Slater, begging, "Mr. Lee, I don't know what this bastard has done, but I'll get him out of here right now. Please just calm down."

Slater kicked the bartender away from him and cleaned his hands with a handkerchief. Then he turned to the manager and said, "You know my temper. This should be the last time. If I see such a bully in this bar again, I'll be very mad at you."

The manager nodded profusely and thanked Slater with all his heart. Without waiting for even a second more, he promptly called his bodyguards to carry the bartender away immediately.

Meanwhile, Slater turned to look at the girl he had just saved. This was the first time he had taken a good look at her and he was stunned by what he saw. But then, he quickly recovered himself and pasted a blank expression on his face.

He had seen many women, but never one as gentle and pure as Ariadna.

For the first time in his life, Slater felt uneasy. He didn't even know how to speak to her. It was as if he was scared that he would frighten this delicate girl if he opened his mouth to speak.

After hesitating for a moment, he scratched his head and said with a chuckle, "Did I scare you just now? There are usually all kinds of people in a bar, you know. Why... why are you alone though?"

Ariadna's watery eyes were fixed on him, which made his heart begin to beat faster.

Then, she nodded, making her tears fall from her eyes. Slater's heart ached when he saw this. He cleaned his hands thoroughly and reached out to help her. He was still tongue-tied. "Well, well, I... you..."

Listening to him stutter, Ariadna's face turned red. She knew he was shy and she had an intuition that this tall and silly man was not a bad person. Giving him her arm, she pulled herself up and whispered to him, "Thank you for what you did just now."



Bountiful Free Coins are waiting
for you, don't miss out!

GO NOW

Chapter 853 Slater's Female Companion

Slater was taken aback by Ariadna's delicate, angelic appearance. He found himself instantly drawn to her.

He gently took Ariadna's hand, his voice softening as he stumbled over his words. "You... You're welcome. I'm Slater Lee. What's your name?"

Ariadna blushed slightly, replying, "I'm Ariadna."

The spilled wine appeared to dissolve into the air, causing an uncomfortable warmth to pervade the ambiance of the bar, unsettling them both.

Despite his many experiences, Slater suddenly felt like an infatuated teenager. He nervously asked, "Ariadna... why are you here alone? Aren't your friends with you?"

Ariadna fluttered her long eyelashes and answered in a hushed tone, "My family's pretty strict... but I got curious and snuck out."

As Slater gazed at Ariadna, he couldn't help but think she resembled a delicate, beautifully crafted glass doll.

Ariadna's voice was soft and pleasant as she expressed her gratitude, "Thanks, Slater. I would have been in real trouble without you. I'm not sure how I can ever thank you enough."

Slater offered a smile in response. "Don't worry about it..."

His eyes briefly met Ariadna's before he averted his gaze. He noticed her attire was at the top of fashion in Vagow.

Slater wondered which wealthy family in Vagow she might belong to. He didn't have an answer, but he assumed Ariadna was from a prominent family.

With this thought, a plan formed in his mind and he said, "Well, I have a favor to request if you feel like thanking me."

Ariadna looked at him, a hint of surprise in her eyes that made her appear endearingly bewildered.

With a cheerful grin, Slater proposed, "I'm going to a party in a few days and I need someone to accompany me. You're beautiful and have a grace about you. Would you be my female companion?"

Ariadna was taken aback by his radiant smile. To her, Slater was a hero, and his compliment touched her.

She blushed, pondering his invitation. Considering Clifford was still occupied and couldn't return to Zodiac yet, she made up her mind. Nodding, she agreed, "Okay, I'll be there."

Slater was visibly pleased. "That's wonderful! But how will I know where to find you? I can come to get you!"

The Cruz family owned property in Vagow. Ariadna, however, had to stay in the hospital until she left Vagow.

Ariadna didn't want Slater coming to the hospital to fetch her. Sneaking out today had already been a challenge. If Slater showed up at the hospital...

It looked like she'd have to sneak out again that day.

With a smile, Ariadna suggested, "How about we meet at the

bar's entrance?"

For them, this place held special significance.

Without hesitation, Slater gave an enthusiastic nod.

Watching him, Ariadna couldn't help but compare him to her energetic husky back home, and she burst into laughter.

Hearing Ariadna laugh, Slater felt a bit shy and pulled out his phone. It was his first time nervously asking a girl for her number.

"How about we exchange contact details?"

That was when Ariadna realized she'd lost her phone. She searched under the sofa until she found it. Seeing missed calls from Loraine made her anxious. She quickly shared her number with Slater, eager to let Loraine know she was safe and prevent any worry.

"Let me give you a ride home. Where do you live?" Slater offered.

Ariadna didn't reply. Loraine had just called. She figured Loraine must've discovered she'd snuck out. She wasn't sure if the Cruz family knew too. Getting a ride from Slater now could complicate things.

With an awkward smile, Ariadna politely declined, "I sneaked out, so I have to be discreet when I go back. I'll manage on my own, but thanks."

Slater understood and didn't push. He waved goodbye with a hint of reluctance.

Long after she'd left, Slater finally lowered his hand, feeling a bit lost. He muttered to himself, puzzled, "She went that way... Isn't that where the hospital and the Cohens' house are? Could

she be a daughter of the Cohen family?"

Excited by the thought, since his family was close with the Cohen family, Slater happily texted his two friends. "Guys, I met a girl who's going to the party with me, and she's gorgeous!"

Chapter 854 A Narrow Escape

Slater and Ariadna were hesitant to part ways, while Loraine, in the hospital, was consumed by anxiety.

Staring blankly at the mannequin in the dressing room, her face ghostly pale, she finally shut the door and returned to the heaps of fancy, limited-edition clothes, feeling a touch of helplessness.

Lorraine muttered to herself, "When I was defiant, did Aldo feel this way too?"

Just as she debated going out to find Ariadna, the door burst open. A young nurse rushed in, clearly panicked. Their eyes locked. The nurse's eyes widened in shock, her complexion ashen. In her flurry, she tripped and fell.

Lorraine sensed the nurse knew something. She examined her and concluded she must be Ariadna's accomplice.

Approaching calmly and closing the door to avoid Tillie's prying eyes, Loraine crouched beside the nurse and asked, "What do you think will happen when the Cruz family learns Ariadna was taken by you?"

The nurse, tears in her eyes, clasped her hand over her mouth and shook her head fiercely. In a whisper, she insisted, "I... I didn't kidnap Miss Cruz!"

Lorraine, far more cunning, threatened the nurse with just a few words, easily extracting information.

"So, where is Ariadna?" she pressed.

The nurse, crying, spilled the beans about Ariadna bribing her and sneaking away. "I didn't think it'd work so well. Mrs. Cruz caused a scene, and nobody noticed..."

Loraine, suppressing a bitter laugh, lowered her voice menacingly. "You're still proud of that, aren't you?"

The nurse vigorously shook her head, realizing Loraine wasn't really blaming her. She clutched at Loraine's sleeve, begging, "Miss Torres, what do we do now? Miss Cruz said she'd be back in half an hour. It's been much longer. I bet Tillie's getting suspicious. What if she finds out?"

Loraine gave a helpless smile. Why didn't they think of a solution when they decided to do this?

She felt a bit anxious. She knew Ariadna had slipped away, but the unanswered phone calls made her worry, not sure if Ariadna was safe or if she should tell Tillie the truth.

Just then, Tillie knocked and asked with a hint of suspicion, "Miss Torres, what's going on in there? Hasn't Miss Cruz finished changing yet?"

The nurse, taken aback, looked to Loraine for guidance.

Taking a deep breath, Loraine tried to sound calm as she answered Tillie, while dialing Ariadna's number.

Thankfully, the call connected this time.

Ariadna's voice, breathless as if she was running, came through the phone. "L-Lorrie!"

Before Loraine could ask her location, Tillie's voice grew louder. "Miss Torres, why isn't Miss Cruz talking? Is something wrong? Open the door, let me in!"

Quickly, Loraine switched the call to speaker mode and turned up the volume.

On the other end of the line, Ariadna heard Tillie's question too. She inhaled sharply and yelled, "Tillie, I'm chatting with Lorrie. Keep it down, will you? Later, I want to have something tasty. How about getting those unique snacks from Vagow?"

Her voice sounded slightly muffled over the phone. Luckily, Tillie, thinking Ariadna was still in the dressing room, didn't give it much thought. After Ariadna's reply, Tillie felt at ease and walked away.

Loraine quickly turned the speaker off. The nurse, relieved, slumped to the floor.

Meanwhile, Ariadna also let out a sigh of relief. Feeling grateful, she said, "Lorrie, I knew you'd have my back!"

Loraine, touching her forehead, was speechless. She never imagined she'd have to cover for Ariadna one day.

Ariadna had already sneaked out, so complaining was pointless. With a resigned sigh, Loraine said, "Ariadna, where are you? You had me worried sick, you know?"

She wasn't scared of the Cruz family, but since Ariadna's last call was to her, she'd feel guilty if anything happened.

Ariadna laughed a little. "Sorry, Lorrie. I didn't mean to drag you into this. Where am I? It's quite a story."

Loraine sighed again and said, "Forget it, just get back here fast. The nurse is scared out of her wits."

The nurse, teary-eyed, nodded. She regretted taking the job, no matter the pay.

Ariadna kept apologizing and said, "Lorrie, I need your help. I'm near the hospital gate, but there's a crowd. I can't sneak through."

Haga clic en el anuncio para ayudar gratis a los autores.



Chapter 855 Dealing With The Fallout

Loraine felt a wave of relief wash over her, knowing that Ariadna was safe near the hospital. But soon, a headache began to throb.

She sighed under her breath, frustrated by the chaos Ariadna had caused.

She knew, however, that Ariadna had just bounced back from a severe sickness, so she grudgingly decided to handle the fallout of her antics.

Loraine rose from her seat and peered out the window. There was Tillie, busy on a phone call, likely arranging for some food delivery.

Recalling her earlier instructions to Tillie, Loraine sighed and dialed her assistant. "Get someone to drop off the new jewelry from Jennie's at the hospital entrance," she instructed.

Soon after, her phone buzzed with a message from her assistant. "Miss Torres, I'm at the hospital gate. Do you want me to bring the jewelry up to you?"

"No need, I'll come down," Loraine replied. She asked the nurse to step into the dressing room and made her way out. Tillie shot her a curious glance and tried to sneak a peek into the room.

"Miss Torres, what's going on? Where's Miss Cruz?" Tillie inquired, suspicion lacing her tone.

Unfazed, Loraine responded calmly, "Ariadna's still getting dressed. I've got to pick up some jewelry that's just been delivered."

Closing the door behind her, Loraine left, leaving Tillie to reluctantly pull her gaze away, still puzzled.

Loraine hurried to the hospital gate, her head down as she texted. She then spotted Ariadna sneaking behind a pillar.

She eyed Ariadna from head to toe, a frown forming. "What happened?"

Ariadna seemed a bit disheveled, her cheeks red and her hair unkempt. Yet, her eyes sparkled with happiness.

Clinging to Loraine's arm, she said in a playful tone, "I'm okay, just had a little tumble. Lorrie, you're such a sweetheart. I'd be lost without you!"

Loraine shook her head, a mix of amusement and concern, and gently tousled Ariadna's hair, smiling warmly.

Ariadna, full of youth and vibrancy, looked so different from the frail girl in the hospital bed. She was truly charming in this state.

Loraine's assistant noticed them and hurried over, holding some jewelry. "Miss Torres, what should I do now?"

Loraine, always thinking ahead, had her assistant fetch a change of clothes and asked Ariadna to dress in the car. With sunglasses and a mask, Ariadna was hardly recognizable.

"You look the part now," Loraine said. "Ariadna, from this moment, you're my makeup artist's assistant, got it?"

Ariadna nodded, following them with her head down.

Reaching the ward's door, Ariadna was just beginning to relax when Tillie approached, eyeing her sharply.

Tillie frowned before asking, "Miss Torres, who is this person?"

Calmly, Loraine stepped in front of Ariadna, gesturing towards her assistant. "She's my makeup artist. She'll help Ariadna with her makeup."

Tillie, still focused on the girl behind Loraine, took a step closer. Ariadna's heart raced, her grip on Loraine's sleeve whitening her knuckles.

Her face and hair could be disguised, but not her build.

Loraine, with a slight smile, cut off Tillie's scrutiny. "She's assisting my makeup artist. Is there a problem, Tillie? Ariadna has been waiting. She's not in the best mood today."

Loraine was taking a risk. Tillie always watched Ariadna closely and stayed near. She'd only step back when Ariadna showed anger.

Ariadna had slipped away, likely with Loraine's prior excuse that she was upset, making Tillie extra careful in choosing clothes and jewelry to appease Ariadna.

Hearing this, Tillie's expression shifted, and she stepped back with a forced smile. "Go ahead inside. I've arranged for food to be brought soon."

Loraine nodded, opening the door for them.

Once it shut, Ariadna quickly removed her mask and sunglasses, catching her breath. Clutching her chest, she exclaimed, "Lorrie, you're amazing! Thank you so much for today!"

Loraine glanced at her, her hand halfway to flicking Ariadna's forehead, but she held back. Annoyed, she said, "Next time you want to go out, just tell me. I'll take you. Do you have any idea how risky it is to sneak out alone? You're braver than I thought."

Ariadna, reminded of the danger she had encountered at the bar and the charming Slater, blushed and softly replied, "I know, but everything's okay, right?"

Loraine eyed her with suspicion, about to question her day out, but then Clifford's voice came from the door, asking Tillie about Ariadna.

Remembering Clifford's odd demeanor towards her, Loraine hesitated, and then said, "Let's leave it for now. Just promise not to run off again, okay?"

Ariadna, though hesitant, realized Loraine's efforts in making time for her today and nodded in agreement.

Leaving, Loraine bumped into Clifford. She greeted him with a polite, yet composed expression.

Clifford didn't say a word. He simply nodded gravely and eyed her with an intense, examining gaze.

Feeling uncomfortable under his stare, Loraine's brow creased. She met his gaze and asked plainly, "Mr. Cruz, is there something on your mind? You're looking at me quite intensely."

Chapter 856 A Small Cake

Clifford's face registered surprise. He hadn't anticipated Loraine's direct approach.

In their earlier confrontation, he had come to respect her greatly.

To him, she was as cunning and shrewd as any man, surpassing many of her peers. So, he didn't see her as just any woman, but as a formidable one.

To his astonishment, she confronted him head-on.

He found it intriguing. A sneer flickered across Clifford's face, but his astonishment vanished almost immediately.

He averted his probing gaze and said with a warm smile, "The Cruz family is organizing a small gathering in a couple of days. We've invited esteemed families from Vagow. Miss Torres, your contributions to our family haven't gone unnoticed, so I extend this personal invitation. We eagerly await your attendance."

Hearing this, Loraine merely nodded and politely replied with a smile, "Mr. Cruz, I appreciate the invite. I'll be sure to be there."

With that, she turned to leave, her smile fading as swiftly as it had appeared.

Yet, Clifford called out from behind her, "Miss Torres, could you also pass along an invitation to Marco?"

Marco? Loraine sensed a hint of displeasure. Why did the Cruz family seem so fond of Marco?

But considering the family's general demeanor towards outsiders, with the exception of Ariadna, she wasn't exactly surprised.

After all, when it came to gratitude, Marco was the Cruz family's savior.

She and Marco had constantly maintained that the Cruz family owed them nothing for their help with Ariadna, yet they insisted on showing their appreciation. And she found it increasingly difficult to refuse their generosity.

So, Loraine turned around with a courteous smile and said, "Don't worry. I'll pass on the message."

Once home, Loraine found herself brooding over Clifford's expression from earlier, her face clouded with annoyance.

Why did he look at her like that? He acted as if he was a wonderful individual with the most noble intentions!

Loraine couldn't resist muttering under her breath, "Damn you!"

Suddenly, laughter echoed from behind her, followed by a voice inquiring, "What's got you so riled up?"

Propping her face up, Loraine turned around to see Marco approaching with a dish in hand.

He settled beside her, a look of uncertainty on his face. After a moment's pause, he extended the small dish he was holding, his lips tensely pressed together.

The dish was elegant, with a gold-patterned rim, but the cake atop it looked rather haphazard. Some cream was spread thickly, while other parts were thin. The cake's base was slightly overcooked, and the red heart in the middle was

crooked.

Confronted with the ugly, imperfect cake, Loraine was so surprised that she found herself at a loss for words.

Marco, lips pursed, murmured, "You've been working hard. Have something sweet to brighten your mood."

His voice was earnest. He hadn't removed his apron, and his face bore smudges of flour and cream, lending a strange look to his usually handsome face.

Loraine felt a laugh bubbling up, but it was overwhelmed by a surge of affection. She gently cleaned a dab of cream from his nose and softly asked, "Did you make this yourself?"

Marco confirmed with a nod, then scooped a bit of cake and brought it to her lips. "I'm not a pastry chef, but I think it turned out alright," he admitted modestly.

Loraine's expression softened immediately. Marco, who had never been one for domestic tasks, was learning to cook just for her. Discovering her sweet tooth, he even started baking.

It was clear why some people were so eager to start their own families. Imagine coming home after a grueling day at work to find your partner waiting with a warm meal, ready to ease your tiredness with comforting words. That was certainly an enviable life.

Loraine hadn't moved for a while, which had made Marco start to feel uneasy.

That day, he hadn't stepped out of the house. He had spent the day in the kitchen after getting some tips from the dessert instructor Jimmie had hired. He had tossed out several failed attempts at cake bases and went through a lot of ingredients before he finally managed to bake a cake that was just

passable.

His baking skills were nowhere near Loraine's. The cake he made might not have been perfect, but he had brought it to her with all his heart and earnestness.

Marco, usually so brilliant and successful in his endeavors, found himself quite anxious due to his mediocre baking abilities. He hadn't caught the gentle look in Loraine's eyes when he shyly whispered to her, "I've heard sweet food can calm the mind. I noticed you seemed upset when you got home, so I hope you could have a taste of this cake."

Loraine nodded in response, mentioning, "My day was spoiled by someone annoying."

At this, Marco had felt a wave of anger. He was already curious about who could have upset her so much.

In fact, he was resolved to find out who had crossed her path that day. Whoever had dampened her spirits was going to regret it!

While he was lost in thought, Loraine gently grasped his face, pulling him back to the moment. She smiled and said, "Your timing with the dessert is perfect."

His face broke into a smile, and he offered the cake once more, saying, "Give it a try. I'll welcome any advice to improve."

But Loraine shook her head and gestured towards the spoonful he had prepared, playfully requesting, "I've had a long day. Could you feed it to me?"

Chapter 857 I Will Protect You Forever

Loraine looked up and smiled sweetly at Marco. She was naturally someone who acted like a spoiled child.

Marco lowered his head and sighed softly.

Could he refuse Loraine now that she was acting in such a coquettish manner?

Of course, he couldn't.

There was almost no space between them right now. At this point, Loraine leaned her head on his shoulder and looked up at him with her bright eyes, as if she was going to flirt with him. "Don't you agree? If you don't, then I'll go and find someone else," she said teasingly.

But she'd hardly finished the words when a spoonful of cake was put in her mouth. Without any change in his expression, Marco said calmly, "You only need me to be your personal housekeeper, don't you?"

Loraine couldn't speak because of the cake in her mouth, but her shoulders were shaking as she laughed heartily. As she chewed the cake, she was able to taste its flavors.

"It seems the cake is a little hard, and the cream also tastes a bit weird," she remarked after a while.

Marco pursed his lips and said nothing. But there was a hint of disappointment in his eyes.

He blamed himself for failing to make the cake taste delicious.

Loraine seemed to notice this and she quickly wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him on the lips. "But I like the taste overall. It tastes quite good," she said with a wide smile in an effort to make him feel better.

Marco's eyes lit up immediately. Her praise made him happy. "Don't worry, I will keep improving," he vowed to her.

Loraine felt very happy. She was glad to have such a considerate and gentle man. His cake made her feel so good and greatly improved her mood. In fact, she had pushed Clifford out of her mind and was now snuggling up in Marco's arms.

Marco put the dish back on the table, and then began to gently massage her shoulders. "What were you worried about before I walked in?" he asked her.

Reminded of her previous thought, Loraine's face darkened in displeasure. Nevertheless, she described to Marco what happened between herself and Clifford earlier in the day. "I just feel that the upcoming banquet hosted by the Cruz family is more than just a banquet. There's more to it, especially since Clifford wants you to attend. What do you think?" she asked him.

Marco didn't reply immediately.

He had already gotten news of this banquet and he knew that Clifford would definitely invite him. But, to his surprise, Clifford was smart enough to send the invitation through Loraine.

Well, since Loraine was going to attend, he had no reason not to go with her.

"Do you want to go?" he asked her after a long silence.

Loraine leaned against him and frowned thoughtfully for a moment. "Maybe," she eventually said with a shrug.

The Torres family had been at the center of attention because of the issue of finding a matching donor for Ariadna. Hence, many people in Vagow who were eager to curry favour with the Cruz family had their eyes on Loraine.

If Loraine didn't attend the banquet, these people would certainly gossip about her, and she would start trending again.

Moreover, since the banquet was to celebrate Ariadna's recovery, she had to attend.

Marco nodded in understanding and said nothing more. He just held her more tightly.

He had expected Loraine to reach this decision, so he was not surprised at all. He knew she couldn't fail to attend.

"But I really don't know why he's inviting you. Why don't you turn him down?" Loraine asked him, straightening herself up immediately.

Clifford was quite a strange man. His behaviour towards the two of them had always been weird.

Since Marco had resigned as the president of Bryant Group and was now an ordinary person, his absence at the banquet would likely go unnoticed. Loraine only hoped that he would be safe and sound.

Seeing the worry in her eyes, Marco chuckled and said in assurance, "As long as you want to go, I'll go with you. No matter what's ahead, I will face it with you."

He knew what Clifford was up to.

His heart sank slightly when he thought of it. Nevertheless, he would have to deal with the matter accordingly.

Hiding his negative emotions, he smiled warmly at Loraine and scooped up another spoon of cake to feed her. "As long as we are together, there is nothing to be afraid of," he said comfortingly.

As she ate the cake, Loraine looked at his face and felt a sense of security. She was sure that no matter what happened in the future, she would never have any reason to be afraid.

As long as they faced everything together and treated each other sincerely, there was no external force that could separate them.

Stretching out her arms, Loraine hugged Marco and leaned her head against his chest. She could hear his steady and powerful heartbeat. "Okay then," she said with a smile. "I'm looking forward to getting your protection during the banquet."

Marco hugged her back and rested his chin on her hair. The wonderful smell of the fragrance from her hair made him feel at ease.

After a moment, he lowered his head and kissed Loraine on her forehead. "I will protect you forever," he vowed in a low but firm voice.

Chapter 858 Lie

After Loraine left the hospital, Clifford stared for a long time with a sullen face in the direction she had gone. Eventually, he scoffed and went back.

But before he got to Ariadna's ward, he had switched the expression on his face to that of a gentle father again.

Ariadna was massaging her legs with one hand while her phone was in her other hand. Apparently, something on the phone had tickled her fancy because she bit her lip and smiled shyly.

She had just opened Slater's social media profile. His profile photo was a selfie in which he looked arrogant and yet a little silly. But because of his handsome appearance, this made him look even more charming.

Ariadna blushed when she thought of the incident at the bar earlier in the day. With the phone in her hand, she shyly buried her face between her knees and giggled.

In fact, she had almost completely forgotten about her sprained leg at this point.

She was so immersed in the beautiful memories in her head that she didn't even notice someone entering the ward.

When Clifford saw Ariadna like this, he frowned in surprise.

He had always been strict when it came to the kind of friends Ariadna had and the kind of company she kept. Ariadna was a very simple young girl. Hence, her feelings were boldly written on her face.

Being an older and experienced person, Clifford immediately deduced from her behaviour that there was something going on with Ariadna. Instinctively, he became very alert.

Who on earth could make Ariadna behave like this? Being in the hospital, there were very few people that she could have contact with.

Clifford narrowed his eyes thoughtfully for a moment. Then he decided to paste a calm expression on his face before clearing his throat noisily.

Immediately, Ariadna came back to her senses. She quickly hid the phone behind her and looked up.

When she saw that it was Clifford, she wore a sweet smile on her face and asked, "Dad, why are you here?"

As far as Clifford was concerned, her smile was a sign of her guilt.

He wasn't happy at all, but he still maintained his composure and made sure to look like an amiable father. "Of course, I'm here to see you," he said with a smile as he walked up to meet her.

After glancing at the phone Ariadna had hidden behind her, he said nothing about it. Instead, he touched her head gently and asked, "Are you feeling better?"

Ariadna was nervous. She hesitated before nodding in the affirmative.

Not sure if Clifford knew her secret or not, she was a little scared that he would say that since she was all right, she should get prepared to go back to Zodiac.

But to her surprise, he didn't say anything of the sort. He only nodded smilingly.

Ariadna felt very lucky. It seemed to her that he had not seen her hiding the phone nor did he know what she had been up to earlier in the day.

She breathed a secret sigh of relief. For someone like her who was not good at lying, she knew that if Clifford wanted to test her, the first few words out of her mouth would instantly give her away.

Frankly, even if he found out about her exploits earlier in the day, Clifford would not do anything to her. But he would certainly scold her verbally and begin to monitor her more closely.

The person who helped her escape would be the one to suffer punishment. Even Tillie would be punished for failing to keep an eye on her.

For the first time ever, Ariadna made up her mind and summoned up all her courage to rebel against her father, which was a natural result of being repressed for more than ten years. Upon her return, even Loraine had given her a few words of warning.

She knew if she could conceal her departure, it would prevent anyone else from facing punishment. However, if caught, she resolved to accept the consequences on her own without implicating others.

Ariadna looked at Clifford for a moment and got the impression that he didn't suspect anything. Feeling a little relieved, she said to him like a spoiled child, "Dad, I'm feeling sleepy. I want to get some rest."

Clifford knew exactly what she was up to. Nevertheless, he smiled at her like a good and amiable father, and said, "Okay, I won't disturb you. Get all the rest you need."

He was a smart man. He knew that if he questioned Ariadna directly, the relationship between them would be affected.

As a good father, all he needed to do was just to remove all the negative factors that he knew would affect her.

Clifford's face darkened as he walked out of the ward. Calling Tillie over, he asked her in a low voice, "What did Ariadna do today? Who came to visit her?"

Seeing how annoyed he was, Tillie didn't dare to lie. She immediately told him everything, "Miss Cruz was in a bad mood today. So she asked for some shops to send clothes and jewelry for her to select from. Later, Florence came to make trouble here. But everything she said is just bosh and not worth mentioning."

She paused for a moment. But then, she suddenly remembered something else. "Oh, and Miss Torres also came to see her," she quickly added.

When Clifford heard this, he nodded knowingly.

He now suspected that Loraine had something to do with Ariadna's change in behavior.

This made him very unhappy with Loraine. In the past, Ariadna used to be so obedient that she would never hide anything from him. But now, she had even learned to lie. Clearly, Loraine had corrupted her!

As for what Ariadna was hiding from him, Clifford called his men over and gave them some instructions. Immediately, they

went to retrieve the surveillance video from the hidden camera in the ward and handed it to him.

When Clifford watched it and saw that Ariadna sneaked out of the hospital and later returned to the ward with Loraine's help, his face became extremely gloomy and he clenched his fists in fury.

It was really because of Loraine!

Gritting his teeth in anger, he pulled out his phone and called his man. "Find out where Ariadna went after she left the hospital today," he ordered. "And make sure the preparations for the banquet are perfect. There must be no mistake!"

After ending the call, he said to himself gloomily, "Loraine, you've already influenced Marco. I won't allow you to mislead my daughter!"

Chapter 859 Breaking Her Promise

Two days passed in the blink of an eye. Within these two days, the upper class in Vagow had undergone a serious upheaval.

The news that the Cruz family in Zodiac had come to Vagow had long been spread far and wide. To confirm the veracity of the news, many people went out of their way to go to the Torres family and ask them about it.

In the last two days, the Cruz family had, contrary to its usual low-key style, sent invitations to the most prestigious families in Vagow, informing them that they wanted to celebrate Ariadna's recovery from the severe illness that had kept her bedridden for so long.

The families that wanted to establish connections with the Cruzes were very excited to hear this. All the invited families in Vagow felt very proud to be chosen. In fact, the invitation quickly became a criteria for a family to be seen as part of the upper class. Any family that was not invited would no longer be considered a prestigious family.

When the D-day finally arrived, Ariadna began to think about how she could escape from the hospital.

She had been a little restless since morning. She didn't give a damn about the banquet the Cruz family was going to hold. After all, this kind of banquet was mainly for the purpose of socializing rather than for any meaningful reason. In fact, it was just a means for the Cruz family to win over the most powerful families in Vagow. She felt it wouldn't make any

difference whether or not she showed up.

There was someone else she had made an appointment with. It was Slater. She had promised to attend an event with him today.

Just then, she got a message from him, asking, "Ariadna, have you come out?"

Ariadna bit her lip as she contemplated for a moment. Eventually, she decided not to reply to him for the time being. She would reply after leaving the hospital.

She tried hard and eventually managed to persuade the nurse to help her with yet another sneak-out.

Meanwhile, Tillie had been stopped outside by the other nurses, who were carefully explaining to her the precautions she needed to take in taking care of Ariadna.

Coincidentally, it was time for Ariadna to take her medicine. The nurse she had arranged with came in with the medicine and quickly switched clothes with her.

They were about the same height, so all that was required was a medical mask to cover her face. As Ariadna went out of the ward in the nurse's uniform, Tillie glanced at her. Ariadna was very nervous, but luckily for her, Tillie didn't seem to notice anything unusual. She simply turned her attention back to the nurses who were still instructing her.

Ariadna felt very relieved. She was so overjoyed that she walked much more briskly than usual. She thought that everything would go as smoothly as it had gone before. Without wasting any time, after leaving the ward, she quickly ran to the gate of the hospital.

But all of a sudden, several bodyguards in black walked in.

astray too.

After listening to him, Ariadna's face turned pale, but she still looked at him stubbornly, and said while holding back her tears, "Dad, I've grown up now. Shouldn't I even have some freedom?"

But Clifford was adamant. "Take her back!" he ordered his men.

The bodyguards apologized to Ariadna and moved to take hold of her. Ariadna was anxious. She knew Clifford would never change his mind. After being led back, she would be under strict surveillance, and even her phone would be taken from her. It would be very difficult for her to sneak out again.

Remembering the fact that she hadn't even replied to Slater yet, Ariadna became very flustered. She was desperately seeking to get the chance to explain to Slater.

But the moment she brought out her phone to send a message, Clifford snapped at the bodyguards, "Get her phone!"

One of them snatched the phone from Ariadna's hand and promptly handed it to Clifford. Ariadna was shocked and mad with anger. "Dad, how can you do this!"

But Clifford ignored her and looked through the chat on the screen.

The person she was chatting with was named Slater Lee. Clifford thought for a while, but he couldn't recall anyone with that name in Ariadna's social circle.

So he clicked on the profile of the individual. When he saw Slater's arrogant selfie, his face darkened in displeasure.

It seemed this man was someone that Ariadna met when she sneaked out the first time. Judging from the profile photo, how could this man be a normal person?

Ariadna was shocked. It took her barely a second to see that they were bodyguards of the Cruz family.

The leader of the bodyguards came up to her and said respectfully, "Miss Cruz, please go back to your room and get some rest."

Under the mask, Ariadna's jaw dropped. She wanted to protest and tell them that they were mistaken about her identity, but before she could open her mouth to speak, a figure walked out from behind the bodyguards. Ariadna's face turned pale instantly. "D... Dad," she gasped.

Clifford looked at her, disappointment in his eyes.

Ever since he learned that Ariadna had sneaked out, he had been on guard. But he had thought she would never do it again. Unfortunately, to his chagrin, she had just proved him wrong.

Ariadna felt both guilt and shame, but she quickly came up with an idea. Plucking up courage, she proceeded to explain, "Dad, I'm sorry I tried to sneak out without telling you, but there's a reason! I made an appointment with my friend for us to go out together today. I'll take good care of myself, dad. You don't need to worry about me. Please let me out."

At the mention of the word 'friend', Clifford thought she was referring to Loraine and he became furious. It was uncommon for him to get mad at Ariadna. "You're not allowed to go anywhere today! Go back and stay in your room! I'll take you back to Zodiac as soon as the banquet is over!" he shouted at her.

Vagow was such a small and vulgar place. This was not really the appropriate place for Ariadna to make friends! As far as he was concerned, his eldest brother's son had been destroyed, so there was no way he could afford to watch his own daughter go

Clifford was horrified that Ariadna had known such a dubious man just within half a day after she went out of control. And she even wanted to challenge his authority again just for the sake of this same man!

There were only few conversations between them, which showed their reserved and uneasy feelings for each other. Clifford felt jealous. But just then, he saw the message Slater last sent. "Ariadna, we are friends now, aren't we?"

With a sneer, Clifford decided to send a reply. "Friends?" he wrote. "You don't deserve it. I don't want to be friends with you, and I won't keep our appointment anymore. You'd better give up!"

After sending it, he deleted Slater's contact and blocked him. Then, he threw the phone back to his man.

Ariadna was upset that Clifford had typed something on her phone. She knew he had sent a message to Slater. Already crying, she asked what he had sent in reply. Clifford looked at her calmly and said, "Ariadna, in the future, you'll know that I'm doing this for your own good. No one in Vagow deserves you."

With that, he ordered the bodyguards to take her back to her hospital room and guard her strictly while he left for the banquet.

In the hospital room, Ariadna felt depressed. She looked out of the window and cried silently.

"Slater, I'm sorry. I broke my promise," she sobbed.

Chapter 860 Slater Was Heartbroken

A handsome young man was standing in front of the bar. Anyone who might have known him before wouldn't believe he was actually the same person.

Back then, he was a playboy who lived however he pleased. But now he was dressed in a perfectly tailored suit, and his hair was slicked back perfectly, giving more depth to his handsome face.

Because of how nervous he was, Slater kept creating scenarios in his head of their meeting.

He had never acted like this in the past; whenever he was interested in a girl, he would give her a lot of money or keep pestering her with texts. His patience would usually wear off after three days.

It was the first time he was being so cautious with a girl, because Ariadna was pure and lovely.

Slater had no intention of giving up on her, but he couldn't hit on her rudely as he was used to doing. He took out his phone and stared at the message he had sent her thirty minutes ago. "Are you out?"

There was a bit of worry in his heart. He made himself feel a bit better by remembering the fact that she had a strict family, so she was probably just looking for a way to leave her home.

Slater adjusted his tie and thought of what Ariadna would show up wearing. He had worn his favorite tie and his brand new

evening suit. He looked dead serious.

His heart melted just by thinking about Ariadna. She really was a kind and innocent girl. She promised to help him even though they had just met.

After waiting for a few more minutes, he texted again. "Ariadna, we are friends now, aren't we?"

More minutes passed until it was now way past the time they were supposed to meet. Slater's heart began to race.

His phone chimed, signifying that a message had been received. His face morphed into one of confusion as he stared at it. He grew very suspicious.

His smile faded away slowly. He blinked repeatedly and reread the message to be sure he was seeing correctly.

More messages kept popping up, making Slater feel colder by the second.

The last message shattered his heart into a million pieces. "You'd better give up!" Everything came crashing down. He didn't know what to do.

Was Ariadna really being serious?

Slater couldn't imagine her saying all those stuff.

Was her kindness just an act?

Slater refused to believe it. As he shifted his hand, his phone almost slipped from his grasp as numbness spread through his fingers. He quickly grabbed it.

It was unlike Ariadna to talk like that, so he texted back. "Ariadna, are you okay? Did anything happen? Why are you

suddenly talking like this? What's wrong?"

Unfortunately, his messages did not get through. She blocked him?!

At that moment, several young men began to file out of the bar. At the sight of Slater, one of them greeted him warmly, "Slater! You look so handsome today. Come grab a drink with us..."

Ignoring his words, he snatched the man's phone from his pocket and unlocked it. He was calling Ariadna. He had memorized her number.

Slater called repeatedly but was only met with the woman's voice that had been programmed, saying that the number was unavailable.

The men around Slater stared at him like he was crazy.

After calling a few more times, Slater was told that the phone was switched off.

A bitter smile formed on his face.

Ariadna stood him up and fooled him?

He had actually been looking forward to their little date, but now it seemed he was the only one who cared, leaving him feeling foolish and disappointed.

"Hey... are you okay? Slater?"

Slater threw the man's phone back at him and stormed off. He sent a text to his friends on the group chat. "I'm not going to the banquet today."

Slater stared at the last message he had sent them, in which he had announced that he had met a gorgeous girl who was

going to come to the party with him. He grinned as tears threatened to spill, walked into another bar and ordered several drinks.

He choked as he gulped down the first glass. His throat felt like it was burning. He wondered if it was his punishment for how he had acted with girls back then. He would have a new girlfriend by the end of every week.

But at least he used to let all the girls down easy, so they wouldn't be too hurt. What was wrong with Ariadna?

"How dare she lie to me?! How could she..." he murmured.

Meanwhile, Loraine and Marco were just about to leave the Torres' house when Beal walked in to inform them that someone sought Loraine's presence.

Loraine remembered her bag which she had left upstairs and asked Marco to help her get it while she attended to whoever the person was.

With a small nod, Marco walked up the stairs. Loraine walked over to the door. She opened the door and was jumped on. "Lorrie!"



Bountiful Free Coins are waiting for you, don't miss out!

GO NOW