

## Love Slave 114

### 114 Unbelievable

I waited for the line to connect but it never did. After trying to call him a few more times, I gave up on it. The session was about to start and using the phone wasn't possible anymore unless I went outside the auditorium. The lights started dimming a little and I was forced to send Ace a text message to ask him where he was instead.

"Do any of you know where Ace is? I can't get in touch with him..." I asked the other team members.

They gave me blank looks that told me that they had no idea. I couldn't help but wonder why none of them were panicking right now just like I was.

"He'll be here in time for our turn to present. Don't worry," Richard told me with confidence.

"Ok..." I mumbled in reply.

If Richard who was usually overly strict said that it was fine, then I had to believe him and have faith that Ace would turn up on time. I knew that he was extremely busy as the CEO of the company so maybe that was why he didn't have hours to spare to sit through this entire presentation.

Suddenly, people started clapping their hands as a lone figure walked onto the stage. According to the program, that must be the committee's representative. The event formally started with his speech. While everyone's attention got sucked in by the representative's speech, I couldn't stop worrying about Ace.

The presentations started right after the speech. Each presentation was capped at 15 minutes and the moderator did his job flawlessly of facilitating the transition between the presentations. We were in the middle of the third presentation already which meant that there was around 20 minutes left until the start of our presentation. As far as I was aware, Ace had not yet arrived.

Glancing over at my team members, none of them seemed anxious about the fact that Ace had not arrived. The other people were very focused on the presentation, and some were actively taking notes. So far, the committee had not asked any surprising or challenging questions and their feedback had been nothing but encouraging and positive to all the teams. It seemed like everything was progressing well. Since this was just the first round, I guessed that the committee members were going easy on all the teams.

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I found the storyline and approach of the teams so far quite interesting although they were not very unique from other storylines on the topic that I have seen before from my studies. My attention shifted from my own thoughts to the stage again when the entire audience exploded into loud applause and cheering. It seemed like our biggest competitor and contender for the year had just made their way up onto the stage.

Chase Creatives...I wonder what they had in mind.

"How's it going?"

“Ace...thank heavens, you’re finally here...I was so worried...” I said before letting out a long and relieved sigh.

Ace casually appeared next to me and took the empty seat on my side that had been left free for him. I had so many things that I wanted to say to him, but I was just too relieved that he made it on time for me to say anything. Ace’s attention wasn’t really focused on me, and I quickly realized that, just like everyone else, his attention was glued to the presentation of Chase Creatives that was just about to start.

I focused my attention on the presentation of our biggest rival as well. They say you better know your enemies as well as you know yourself and then there was something else about keeping your enemies close to you.

“Honorable committee judges, ladies, and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be here today as a representative of Chase Creatives. My name is Elizabeth Chase, and I am the acting CEO of Chase Creatives. Today, I am proud to present to you our take on this campaign...” a female voice rang out loud and clear through the speakers.

Elizabeth...

It can’t be the same Elizabeth!

I leaned forward in my seat to get a closer look at her face. She was too far away for me to see clearly but her voice sounded familiar, and her name was exactly the same as the woman that paid me a visit very recently.

“She’s really got her act together as always...” Ace commented from next to me.

“It can’t be...” I whispered in shock.

Ace turned and flashed me a smile that told me that he had known all along.

But how could it possibly be?

Is he telling me that Elizabeth, Kyle’s wife, is the CEO of our biggest rival?

“Surprised?” Ace asked with a mocking smile with his eyes still looking straight forward at the presentation.

My mouth hung open and I was speechless. When Kyle got married, I never dreamt that it was to the CEO of our company’s largest rival. How small was the world?

And...why was Kyle working at Jessen’s and Hill’s if he was dating Elizabeth? Wouldn’t it make more sense for him to be working at her company instead?

So many questions rushed through my mind, and I had no way to find the answers to them. Ace didn’t seem too concerned about this fact and I wondered how long he’d known this. I felt so stupid for not realizing this before when I saw their wedding photo. Maybe it was because I was too focused on Kyle to really focus on his bride or maybe because I didn’t spend that much time looking at the photo simply because it hurt and made me furious at his betrayal. Most of all, I never imagined that there was the

slightest possibility that Elizabeth of all people would be Kyle's bride. That fact, most of all, must have been the reason why I didn't recognize her.

Elizabeth was dressed in a pristine and expensive-looking white suit with her hair neatly pulled back into an elegant bun at the back of her head. She looked way more mature than the woman I had met in front of the company building. The way she was dressed was also extremely different from the princess-like look that she sported when she came to meet me.