

## Love Slave 116

### 116 Weathering the Storm

"Julianna, can you buy us some time?" Ace asked with a smile.

"Leave it to me. I don't work in marketing for nothing..." Julianna said as she got up from her seat.

She seemed to believe that she could buy us some time and Ace seem confident enough to leave things on that end in her hands. It was clear by now that we can't go up there and present the storyboard that we had prepared for this meeting. However, we can't go up there without anything to present either.

"Jeremy, you got this, right?" Ace asked as he turned to Jeremy.

That was when I realized that Jeremy had his laptop open and was busy working on something. From where I was seating, I couldn't see his laptop screen. Richard had his eyes on Jeremy's laptop screen as he nodded his head. Jeremy started exchanging some words with Richard before he turned to Ace and smiled.

"We've got this, Boss," he said, completely unfazed.

Rounds of applaud thundered all around us and that marked the end of Chase Creatives' presentation. Now it was our turn.

"Thank you for everyone's attention. We will be taking a short 10-minute break before proceeding with the next presentation. Thank you for your patience," the host announced.

"Wow. She bought us 10 minutes. Julianna is amazing..." Ace said with a small chuckle.

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"This way, Boss..." Jeremy called out for Ace to follow him.

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The past ten minutes must have been the longest ten minutes in my entire life. After Ace and Jeremy disappeared, I was left with the rest of the team members. By that time, I had already figured that somehow this leak must have been my fault. The fact that the person who got her hands on my storyboard sequence was in fact Kyle's wife only made me feel even more convinced that I was the source of the leak.

Unfortunately, everyone's thoughts were correct. Ever since breaking up with him, I wasn't in contact with Kyle, and I definitely did not talk to him about the work that I had been working on. Even when he talked to me and warned me about Ace, I never told him about Project Alpha. As an employee of the company and someone working in this industry, he must have heard about the competition.

I couldn't think of a potential leak apart from one event. A loud sigh escaped my lips and I felt multiple pairs of piercing gazes on my face. If Kyle was responsible for the leak, then it must have happened that evening when he came to my place. Thinking back, I was so rushed to get him to leave that I let him go into my room alone. I didn't remember things so clearly for that day, but was it possible for him to see my storyboard or get a hold of it somehow while he was acting like he was packing up his things?

That had to be it because I couldn't think of anything else.

A feeling of guilt like I had never felt before consumed me and suddenly, my entire body was trembling. My lower lip shook, and I had to bite down on it while my entire body started feeling very cold. This crisis that we were going through was all because of my carelessness. Ace and the entire team were suffering because of me. That wasn't the extent to the damage, if we don't get through this first round what would happen to the reputation of the company that I admired so much that I wanted to work here no matter what.

This is all my fault.

It angered me that Kyle had somehow betrayed me a second time but the anger that I felt towards him paled in comparison to the anger that I felt towards myself. How did I let something like this happen?

All the while that I had been worried and feeling guilty about hiding Kyle's visit to my room from Ace, I should have been worried about our confidential data leak. I didn't dare face the people in my team anymore and I was thankful that they did not directly shout or yell at me right there in the auditorium. Although, if they did, I would gladly take it. I truly deserved their wrath this time around without a doubt.

I wanted to crawl into a hole to hide from all the shame so that I could cry in private. However, that wasn't a realistic option right now.

"What do you think will happen?" a team member spoke up.

"Ace, Jeremy, and Richard will figure out something for sure," another member answered with confidence.

Even at a time like this, it was amazing how the other team members had so much faith in Ace and the other members. Somehow, we're going to get through this, right?

"Shhh! It's starting..." another member hissed.

He was right, Ace's presentation was about to start. Unlike what was planned, Ace took the stage with a smiling Jeremy at his side.

The presentation progressed so smoothly that I bet that no one in the committee or the audience could tell that something extremely wrong had taken place behind the scenes. When the first slide of the storyboard was projected, everyone in the team including myself, gasped out loud.

The storyboard is entirely different...

When did those two work on this?

"That's Ace for you. Plan B..." Julianna spoke up with clear admiration in her voice.

"Always have a plan B..." Richard murmured in agreement with a nod of his head.

Did these people know already that Ace had been working with Jeremy on another storyline and storyboard?

He didn't even tell me about it...

I recalled Ace telling Jeremy to stay behind after the meeting. Did they stay back to review this backup storyboard together?

Of course, I was relieved that there was another storyboard that could be used in our proposal that wasn't basically the same as the one stolen and presented beforehand by our competitor, but I just couldn't stop thinking of why Ace didn't mention this to me.

Did he not...trust me?