

Love Slave 117

117 Entirely to Blame

My eyes were glued to the presentation that was taking place on the stage. Ace and Jeremy presented very well in sync with one another with Ace adding more flavor and thoughts to Jeremy's description of his storyboard. I had no idea if those two practiced for this or not, but it truly looked like they had rehearsed this more than a handful of times. Either that, or the two of them could pull something like this off at a whim.

Regardless of the unexpected turn of events, our company managed to pass the first round of the competition and even receiving a few compliments from some of the committee members. I guess it was a good idea that Ace split the team up into smaller teams to get different angles and to develop various storyline and storyboards for this project. As a result of that there were back up plans and back up storyboards that could be beefed up for the presentation.

Even though everyone including myself was relieved that the presentation went and ended well, we couldn't simply ignore the fact that Chase Creatives had stolen our original idea and storyboard. The worst part was that there wasn't any solid proof for us to take any further action with that. At least, that was how I viewed things. I bit on my lower lip as Jeremy and Ace walked off the stage as reality came flooding back to me.

Now that the presentation was over, my attention reverted to focus on the fact that I was the one responsible for the leak. The result of that was detrimental for the course of this project. Because Ace and Jeremy had presented another storyboard entirely, the one that was stolen could no longer be used by our company. Instead, it would be used by Chase Creatives.

I closed my eyes and let all the terrible feelings bubble to the surface. Ace and I worked so hard on getting the storyline and putting together the storyboard. I really put my sweat and tears into that and now it was all stolen and gone.

"Let's get out of here..." Julianna said dispassionately as she stood up from her seat.

The other team members did the same and began walking out. I could feel their intimidating and accusing stares as they walked past me. After they had gone ahead, I got up from my seat and heaved a large sigh before exiting the auditorium. The presentation was over but none of this was really over. The burning question on everyone's mind right now is probably who was responsible for the leak and how did it happen. Depending on the circumstances, I realize that this could be considered one of the worst possible crimes in our industry: corporate spying or espionage.

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When we all arrived back to the office after a silent and suffocating drive, Ace called for a team meeting immediately. It didn't come as a surprise to me. There were matters about Project Alpha's direction and changes that probably needed to be discussed. On top of that, there was the issue of the confidential information leak.

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Everyone entered the meeting room, and I was among them. As usual, everyone took their seat at the meeting table. Ace and Jeremy were the last two to make it into the room. Ace took his usual seat at the table. Despite all that had taken place, Ace seemed extremely calm as if it did not bother him at all.

"Well, some interesting things happened today..." Ace said when he sat down.

"Excuse me. Before we start the meeting, there is something that I would like to say," Julianna spoke up quite loudly.

"Go ahead," Ace said invitingly.

"Karina does not belong here in this meeting. Please excuse her from this meeting. Until we can clear her suspicion for the storyboard leak, I firmly believe that she should not participate in this meeting or be exposed to anymore confidential information. Please consider my request," Julianna declared boldly as she pointed a finger my way.

The way that the other team members looked my way with a look filled with contempt and disgust made me certain that everyone probably felt the same way. I guess it shouldn't surprise me. Julianna was bold and straightforward about it, but she was right. I should not be here until all suspicions around me are cleared.

"I agree. Karina, please leave the meeting for now," Ace said without hesitation.

"One more thing," Richard spoke up loudly.

Ace nodded at Richard for him to go on and that was what he did.

"I request for a thorough investigation to get to the bottom about the source of the recent confidential information leak," Richard stated sternly.

"Approved. I was planning to do exactly that without your request. This company does have protocols to deal with these matters and I believe that all of you are aware of that already," Ace replied calmly and smoothly.

All eyes were on me as I stood up from my seat. I nodded a little to excuse myself in silence. I could still feel everyone's glare burning into my back as I walked out of the room and closed the meeting room door firmly behind me.

Well, that was a complete disaster, wasn't it?

Not knowing where to go and what to do, I decided to take a walk to clear my head a little. I knew that sooner or later, I had to talk to Ace directly about this to clear up all the misunderstandings and to also owe up to the mistake that I made. After all, intentional or not, I am the one responsible for this mess.

Once again, I was forced to realize that my job and my entire career was at risk. I fully admit that it was my fault for being careless and that all of this happened because of me; however, for what it's worth, I just wanted Ace to know that it wasn't intentional. I didn't plan any of this. Most of all, I would never betray him or the company that I admire so much.