

Love Slave 12

Chapter 12: The Forbidden Rule

"Hey girls!" I said cheerfully into the group video call with my two best friends.

Lillian and Jennifer. We've been friends since university started and went through university together. Throughout the four years, we helped each other out and worked so hard towards our graduation.

"Hi hi. I can just tell by how cheerful you are that you have some good news to share. Am I right?" Lillian said with a bright smile.

"Yup yup. Even I can tell that much as well. So...tell us!" Jennifer demanded.

"I got the job!" I announced proudly before clapping my hands and laughing with joy.

"Oh wow!" Lillian cried out happily.

"Congratulations!!!" Jennifer exclaimed almost at the same time as Lillian as they both heard my good news.

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Although we all acted so excited, it was a fact that I was the last person out of the three of us that landed a fulltime job after graduation. Lillian was the first one who got a job as part of the PR team at one of the leading cosmetic and personal care company. I had to say that the job suited her style so much that I envied her at the time.

Soon after Jennifer got a job working in a design team for a jewelry and accessories company. I remembered we went out to celebrate by eating buffet for dinner followed by watching a late-night movie together. Just the three of us. Those were the good times.

After those two got their job, things got very busy for them, and we saw each other less than before. I missed them but I was happy that they were adjusting well to their new phase of life and their new job. Now, it seems like it was finally my turn.

"Thank you! Since you're both ahead on this new-job curve, don't forget to tell me some tips and tricks. I'm actually quite nervous about this!" I admitted truthfully.

"Sure thing. You can count on us...although I would say that I'm still pretty nervous at work. Everyone is just so much more experienced, you know? My team is also small, so I was the only new joiner in this batch..." Jennifer said with a loud sigh.

"I quite like my job so far. The seniors in my team are so friendly and helpful. I haven't gotten the hang of everything yet, but I think I'm getting there. Don't worry, Risa. I'm sure you'll do fine as always," Lillian said comfortingly.

I chatted with the girls until my mother came back from her food shopping trip. We enjoyed dinner together along with Auntie, who as I had guessed, was brought home by my mother. When dinner was over, I walked Auntie back to her house before coming back to rejoin my mother.

That night we prayed in front of my father's photo and told him the good news. I wondered how he would react and what he would say to me if he was still alive. I don't remember him at all, so it was difficult for me to imagine his reactions.

That night I watched as my mother went to sleep with a smile on her face. I'm sure that she was tired from her work but still went out to buy food for us. She was extremely happy, and I felt extremely proud of myself. The day that I would be able to support our family was fast approaching.

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After signing the job contract, I formally became an employee of Jessen & Hills and today marks the first day of work for me. Today is orientation day. Every new joiner must go through a short 2-day orientation course. The first day HR would go over everything from the company's history, rules and regulations, employee benefits and everything else that we needed to know. The second day was reserved for team building activities with the main objective for new joiners to get to know each other.

I sat in an auditorium with a large stage in front and a projector screen. This was a different auditorium from the one that I was in when I was a candidate. I guess I shouldn't be surprised that this building had multiple auditoriums considering its size and state-of-the-art technology.

Suddenly the lights in the auditorium dimmed and a middle-aged woman walked up on the brightly lit stage. Although she was old, she still radiated activeness and poise. The woman was dressed in a black business suit with matching skirt that looked expensive, and her hair was swept up in a stylish knot at the back of her head.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Jessen & Hills. My name is Nina Leslie, and I am the head of Human Resources of this company. It is an honor to be here to welcome all of you here today. Today we will be going over the history of our company, our mission and motivation. Then my colleague will take you through the various details that will help you have a smooth transition into this company," the woman said in a very clear voice. Everything about her was professional yet warm and empathetic.

"Before that I would like to inform you of an iron-clad rule that this company would like all of its employees to strictly uphold at all times. In this company, romantic relationships between employees are strictly forbidden," the woman announced in a very serious tone.

"What?"

"Seriously?"

"In this time and age, this rule still exists?"

"I thought this company was supposed to be modern..."

"No big deal, right? We can always date someone outside the company..."

"Isn't the rule a little weird?"

I heard various murmurs from all around me as everyone started expressing their shock and discontent over the no-dating rule. I personally didn't think that this rule was necessary. If we are supposed to be professional enough, then we should be able to separate our personal from our professional lives. However, I guess I could understand the point of view of the company. It could be counter productive or

cause unnecessary conflict and tension if employees dated each other. Especially, when the relationship went sour...