

Love Slave 133

133 Facing the Consequences

"Well, as you have just heard, that is how it is..." Ace said without much interest.

"If they truly withdraw, then it wouldn't be a stretch for us to win the competition," Richard voiced with certainty.

"I agree. Plus, we can revert back to using our original storyboard as well," Julianna chimed in.

Suddenly, the atmosphere in the room had relaxed. Things were finally looking up for the team again and the prospect of our company winning the competition seemed realistic.

"Karina has something to say. Please listen to her," Ace said sternly.

Everyone quietened down as they waited for me to speak. After Elizabeth's announcement, it seemed like they were less hostile towards me, but things were very far from normal or how it used to be before this all started. I stood up from my seat as I tried to keep my knees from giving out from under me.

"First of all, I would like to apologize. I am in fact the source of the leak. However, I would like everyone to know that the leak was never intentional on my part. I understand that that doesn't make me less guilty or void of responsibility for what has happened. Due to my carelessness, the information regarding our storyboard was leaked to the competitor and that placed us in an extremely precarious situation. I caused so much damage to this project, this team, and this company as a whole. For that, I don't have any excuses for myself," I said as calmly as I could.

My little speech didn't go as smoothly as Elizabeth's, but I was sure that my honesty and the feelings behind my words were as strong if not stronger.

"Karina is scheduled to meet with the disciplinary board later this afternoon," Ace informed the team.

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I nodded along with his words. At least, I wanted everyone to know that I did not intend for this to happen and that I was willing to bear the consequences.

"You shouldn't have been careless..." Richard muttered.

"I am so very sorry for the trouble that I've caused to all of you..." I apologized again.

"Somehow you helped us get rid of our main competitor, so it's not all bad, right?" Jeremy spoke up optimistically.

It really was like something that Jeremy would say. The others didn't seem to share in his optimism, though.

"Not really. I would have preferred to win this competition with Chase Creatives still in it. Then we can claim that we really won," Julianna commented before she heaved a sigh.

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A few hours after the meeting with other team members, it was time for me to finally face the disciplinary committee. I gripped my mobile phone tightly in my hand as I tried to brace myself mentally for what was to come. The hardest part would be to break this sad and sudden news to my mother. I had to prepare something to say to ease her worries. I even thought as far as hunting for another job first before telling her that I got fired. Maybe that way I didn't have to tell her that I lost my job, and I could perhaps phrased it as I got a new job instead.

The other hard part would be leaving Ace. If I left this company and no longer worked as his secretary, then that would probably be the end of our relationship as well. I wouldn't see him anymore and everything that we had would probably disappear into thin air as well. Perhaps, that was for the best for me and both of us. I closed my eyes tightly before taking in a deep breath before slowly letting it out.

I would be dreaming if I thought that whatever relationship I had with Ace would last.

I opened my eyes again and firmly pushed opened the door that would bring me in front of the entire disciplinary committee. When I started working, I never dreamt that a day would come when I would have to face them to receive my punishment like this. Life is truly full of unexpected twists and turns.

"Welcome Karina. Please take a seat," a woman who was probably in her late fifties said as she gestured with her thin hand for me to a seat.

There was a single chair positioned in the center of the room facing the panel of the disciplinary board members. I sat down while keeping my eyes casted down humbly.

"Please tell us exactly what happened," the woman instructed.

I looked up at the disciplinary board member and I also gasped in surprise when my eyes landed on Ace. He never told me that he was part of the board!

His hazel eyes were on me, and his lips curved into a small encouraging smile. When our eyes met, I quickly recalled the advice that he gave me on top of telling me to be honest with the board members.

"Although I told you to be completely honest with them, you don't have to tell them every single thing," Ace advised sternly.

"What do you mean exactly?" I asked as my brows drew together.

"You do realize that if you tell them everything, they'll find out about your past relationship with Kyle, right?" Ace pointed out as he looked pointedly at me.

Oh, I didn't even think of that. With the severity of the situation surrounding the leak of the storyboard, it didn't immediately dawn on me that if I told the whole story then I would have to expose the fact that Kyle and I were in a relationship. I mean, why else would he turn up to my apartment room to get his things otherwise?

Why didn't I realize this earlier?

On top of being fired for leaking the information, I could be fired and punished again for having a romantic relationship with a colleague from the same company. Suddenly, I felt like I had seriously turned into a criminal.

“You’re right. Why didn’t I think of this earlier...” I mumbled in reply.

“You can be truthful without telling them everything. If I were you, I’ll leave out the part about him visiting your room. Better yet, you can leave out the whole part about Kyle’s involvement,” Ace suggested calmly.