

Love Slave 272

272 Stirring Doubts

My mouth fell open in shock and it took all of my self-control not to let out any sound of shock. The chairman turned around to face me and my entire body froze in place. My legs wanted to take me as far away from him as possible. However, I knew that there was no way that I could turn and run away from the chairman after he had asked to see me.

Why is Ace's father here? What does he want from me?

"Karina, take a seat," he said as he gestured with his hand at the seat opposite to his at the meeting table.

I dreaded seeing the chairman even more than before since Ace made his announcement to retire from his position as CEO. Although I knew that Ace must have spoken to his father about his plans already, he did not tell me in detail how things went down between them. Simply because he did not mention anything, I had assumed that everything must have gone well. I dared to steal a look at the Chairman's face, and I was convinced that this pair of father and son never reached any kind of agreement.

"I hope you're not too busy to talk to me," he said before his lips curved into a smile that was too pleasant.

"What would you like to talk about?" I asked in a small voice as my heart raced in my chest.

The room felt colder than usual, and the sound of my rapid heart rang too loudly in my ears. I wasn't sure what the chairman wanted from me but I could guess that it must have something to do with Ace's plan to retire. Ace's father must have realized that the deadline is fast approaching and that if he wanted to do something to stop it then he had to act now.

"I am sure that you are aware that Project Alpha is going to come to an end very soon since I heard that you're staffed on the project as well," he said sternly.

"Y-Yes..." I replied softly and in a shaky voice.

.....

"I don't know if you know this, but Ace is still very adamant about stepping down from his position as CEO," he said before he paused as if to watch my reaction.

"Yes, I am aware..." I replied while trying to tell myself to stay calm.

"I see. Then, I'm going to get straight to the point. I want you to find a way to stop him from quitting his job as the CEO," the chairman said as his eyes stared straight at me.

I felt a lump form in my throat. His request was reasonable, but it was very unrealistic. If his father couldn't convince him then what made the chairman believe that I could. Ace wasn't just very stubborn; he was also very determined. Although I didn't know what he had planned, I was sure that Ace had thought this over many times before he made his decision. I believed that he truly thought that this was for the best so convincing him otherwise was going to be extremely difficult if not plainly impossible.

"I...I don't think that I can do that," I replied regretfully.

"You don't seem to understand the position that you're in. If Ace quits his job, he's going to disappear again and he's going to leave you. The last time he quit and went away, he left everything and everyone behind without a care. Have you thought about what you're going to do if Ace leaves? Don't you want to keep working for this company?" he asked.

I knew that he was trying to drive me into a corner and that he was trying to make me doubt Ace. However, his questions really got me thinking. I had just always assumed that Ace would always be with me. We worked at the same company, and it just felt natural to have him close. I never really thought about what it would be like not to have him around. I didn't know the details surrounding the time when he quit this company before, but it seemed like he did disappear somewhat from the scene.

Did he go abroad?

"Are you willing to go wherever he decides to go? What about your career, Karina? I've heard many good things about you and how passionate you are about your work. This company is supposed to be your dream workplace, is it not? Or has that already changed?" he asked as if he was prompting me to think.

If Ace left, would I leave with him? Where would we go?

What about my work here and my all my colleagues? What about pursuing my career and my dream?

I didn't know what to think and so I wasn't sure how to reply to the chairman's long list of questions. Honestly, I felt so pressured and so overwhelmed by what he was saying and the future that he was hinting at.

"I'm sorry but I..." I began apologizing for my lack of answers.

"Your answer should be clear. The easiest solution for you is to make sure that things stay the way that they are now. Keep Ace here with you. He'll be doing what he should be doing while you can continue to pursue your dream career. Of course, when he achieves his goal of growing the company, as promised, I will acknowledge your relationship and will let you two proceed with the wedding," the chairman continued persuading me.

For a moment, I wondered if he was right. Perhaps the answer was that simple. Perhaps there didn't need to be any complications, if only I could convince Ace to stay. I had always thought that he was an outstanding CEO to the point where I couldn't imagine what the company would be like if he wasn't leading it. In that respect, I could understand where his father was coming from.

However, even if I did honestly agree with the chairman and shared his wishes, it doesn't solve the problem that was immediately in front of me.