

## Love Slave 290

### 290 Celebration

"The launch looks good. All the placements look good..." Julianna murmured as she continued checking the screens.

"There shouldn't be any issues. Now we just need to wait for the feedback from the audiences," one team member said reassuringly.

"We actually went out to the shopping district earlier to get some firsthand feedback," I announced with a smile.

"Ace dragged you out there with him? How did it go? Were people super excited?" Julianna asked excitedly.

I could feel all pairs of eyes in the room on me and it was clear that I had their attention now. Since everyone was undoubtedly stuck here in the war room in the office, they haven't had the chance to see the real commercial playing outside or had any interaction with the audience. Now I truly understood why Ace was so determined to go out there to collect some feedback. It wasn't just to satisfy his personal curiosity but it also made sure that we had something to share with the other team members.

"I would say that people are excited. I've only heard positive reviews. The message that we planned seemed to be getting across well. I was also told that the commercial is easier to watch compared to the other ones related to the dog meat trade because we didn't put in any gruesome scenes," I relayed my experience to the team members.

"I think the commercial is very well-received. For pet lovers, it is a very touching commercial while for non-pet lovers, it makes them consider this topic more. Of course, this is just preliminary and we'll have to keep monitor the audiences' sentiments," Ace added in.

"That sounds heavenly. More than good enough for our first launch night," Julianna said with a satisfied smile.

"Don't get ahead of yourself so much. We haven't seen the donation amount yet..." Ace reminded us of the other key objective of the commercial.

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Julianna let out a sigh and I did the same. Getting positive reactions was only the starting point. It wouldn't be enough if it didn't lead to putting any money behind the cause to support it. Unfortunately, all problems seem to require some money to help fund the solution. Fishing for compliments for our commercial would be so much easier than to get people to pay to support the cause.

"Maybe if you'll give me my paycheck for the month earlier, I can donate my pay to support the cause..." Julianna said teasingly before she laughed a little.

"Oh, that actually sounds like a good idea. I'll pay for your drink tonight if you donate your salary to the cause," another team member readily agreed.

"Enough joking around. You all should go out now before it gets too late," Ace suggested.

“Thank you, boss! I’ll make sure to come back to monitor the whole thing tomorrow morning,” Julianna promised as she got up from her seat and gathered her things.

Everyone moved to do the same and it seemed like the night of work had come to an end and a celebration was in order. We haven’t won the competition yet, but the launch was clearly one of the biggest milestones that we’ve achieved so far in this project, and it does warrant a celebration.

“Do you want to join them?” Ace whispered to me.

“Ace! You’ll come along, right?” Julianna asked invitingly before I could reply to Ace’s question.

“Sure. I think that’s a great idea...” I quickly voiced when I saw Ace hesitating.

It had been a while since we went out with the team and going out might help me keep my mind off the issue of Elizabeth’s sudden appearance earlier on in the day. The overall mood was so festive that I found it hard to get used to at first. After spending so much time working under stressful and tight deadlines, this sudden change in pace felt sudden although it wasn’t at all unwelcomed.

“Where are we going to go?” I asked.

“James booked a rooftop bar. Supposedly they have good and cheap happy hour drinks. I wouldn’t mind if the cocktails are bad at this point, honestly...” Julianna replied.

I watched as everyone made their way out of the war room to call it a night. I bumped into Jeremy as we made our way out of the room. He looked tired and I could tell that he had been with Julianna and her team for the whole day. That made me feel slightly bad for ditching him to go out with Ace.

“Hey, are you joining everyone for drinks?” I asked.

“Nope. I’m about to fall flat on my face. I have no idea where Julianna gets all her energy from but I’m pretty much burnt out so I’m heading home,” Jeremy replied with a regretful smile.

“That’s too bad. Hang in there. Go home and get some sleep,” I said with a small laugh.

Jeremy just smiled at me before heading out of the door. I watched as he disappeared down the hallway while thinking that it really was too bad that he didn’t have the stamina to join the celebration. Julianna and her team were quite loud as they made their way down the corridor. As far as they were concerned, it seemed like the party had already started.

“Shall we head out too?” I turned to ask Ace.

I found his eyes watching me intently and I sudden felt a little uncomfortable under his scrutinizing gaze. Ace had a slightly thoughtful look on his face as he continued to observe me. The longer he stared at me, the more I started to feel nervous.

“Why are you...looking at me like that?” I asked.

“I was wondering when you and Jeremy got so close,” he replied with his hazel brown eyes still watching me.

“We’re not close. We’ve just been stuck working together a lot for Project Alpha. So...we’re not close like that...” I quickly cleared up this misunderstanding before it could lead somewhere troublesome.

“Is that so?” Ace said as he cocked his head to the side.