

Love Slave 300

300 Calm Before the Storm

"I'm fine. Thank you. How is everything going?" I asked.

Julianna must have been referring to the fact that I had to leave the party early. In all honestly, I was as fine as I could be physically. Emotionally, the problem that I was facing wouldn't be over until this project was over. In a sense, I was just a victim of time and Ace's merciless attempt to keep everything from me.

"So far so good. It could have been better..." Julianna mumbled before biting on her lower lip.

"What's the matter?" I asked as I suddenly felt like something was off.

"Julianna's just not happy with the viewing stats. There's nothing to worry about yet, it's still morning..." Ace replied calmly.

I turned to see him sitting at the head of the table in a relaxed manner. It didn't seem like I missed out on a lot of action early in the morning. Julianna was clearly on edge but I was sure that a major part of that was due to her high expectations of everything rather than the actual performance of the commercial. If Ace thought that things were progressing well, then they must be.

"Is Jeremy in yet?" I asked when I failed to spot him in the war room.

"He came in earlier but headed out to buy some coffee for the team," a member of Julianna's team replied with a grin.

"Oh, I see..." I mumbled.

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That reminded me that I bought coffee for Ace. He seemed quite busy reading something although the atmosphere around him seemed quite calm. I approached him before taking a seat next to his. Ace glanced over my way briefly while his lips curved into a little smile. He didn't say anything to me, though.

"Here's coffee for you and some food. You know, in case things get busy and lunch isn't possible..." I told him before showing him a smile.

"Thank you, Rina. You're a wonderful secretary," Ace complimented me softly so that his words were for my ears only.

I looked around nervously to make sure that no one else caught what he had just said. It wasn't at all like Ace to compliment anyone so sweetly like this. Thankfully, everyone seemed so busy with their work that no one paid attention to us at all. I let out a sigh of relief before turning my attention back to Ace who had started drinking his coffee.

"Is everything really, ok?" I asked without being able to stop myself.

"Well, everything seems to be progressing smoothly. The stats from yesterday aren't bad if you ask me but Julianna has a different view on that. It's just the first day so we need to keep on monitoring. Today

is the second day but it's still morning, we're not going to see any solid trends until later in the day," Ace explained smoothly.

"I see...that makes sense..." I replied while nodding my head slightly in agreement.

Ace flashed me a smile before turning his attention to his laptop screen. I could tell that he was working on something else that had nothing to do with Project Alpha and that reminded me that Ace was a very busy person. I wondered if there was something that I could do to help out the team and then quickly noticed that there was probably nothing that I could do that would be of use right at that moment.

The door to the war room swung open and a flustered-looking Jeremy walked in with bags of coffee in both his hands. His face was slightly red and it was clear that he had hurried back from his errand. Everyone's mood seemed to brighten up when they saw Jeremy because that meant that their coffee had arrived. I watched as Jeremy passed out coffee to everyone based on their orders.

"Good morning, Jeremy..." I greeted him with a smile.

"Good morning. Seems like we're in for a busy day today..." he replied with a smile.

"Well, I guess so..." I said lightly.

"Jeremy, can you come over here and take a look at this for a second. Is this part meant to be like this here?" Julianna called Jeremy over.

He quickly went to her side and soon the two of them were engaged in a deep conversation that seemed to take up their entire attention span. I wondered if something was wrong but then decided to leave it to the two of them to figure out. I sat next to Ace in silence so that I wouldn't disturb anyone. Although everyone else had something to do, I didn't have anything to do at all. Just when I thought that it might be better for me to clear up some of my secretarial work, Ace turned to me.

"Rina, you don't have to be here if you have something else to do. This is a little like the calm before the storm, so I suggest that you take this opportunity to clear up whatever you need to do so that you'll have time and energy to focus when the time comes," Ace instructed calmly.

"I see. I guess you do have a point. I should do that..." I readily agreed.

"Good. Don't worry, Julianna or I'll let you know when you are needed here," he told me with a firm nod of his head.

I hesitated a little to leave and it must have showed because Ace gave me a reassuring smile. I pursed my lips together and nodded my head at him once before gathering my things and leaving the war room. The truth was, I had some work to clear out and this might be the right opportunity to do so.

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Ace was right about that little break in the day being the calm before the storm and I was right about a proper lunch being an unrealistic occurrence for that day. I returned to the war room at around lunch time to find everyone still working. The atmosphere in the war room felt substantially heavier than it was in the morning.