

The Almighty Dominance - Chapter 131[1,187 words]

Chapter 131

Sophia's hands were locked together so tightly her knuckles went alc.

Every breath she drew felt ragged, quivering with dread. Beside her in the car, Hanks kept his posture rigid.

He knew better than to lay a finger on a woman destined for Harlan Drake.

He valued his own skin too much.

"Listen up," Hanks sald in a low, steady voice. "You're about to meet Harlan Drake. Do exactly what he tells you. Man's got no patience, and he'll break yet if you give him a reason. One swing from him could shatter every bone in that slender arm of yours."

When the car finally stopped, Hanks threw the door open. "Out. Now. Don't make me haul you out myself."

Sophia's legs trembled as she stepped onto the gravel.

The mansion sprawled before her-its cold, imposing silhouette famed by perfectly trimmed hedges.

A heavy sense of foreboding clung to the air. Hanks clamped a hand around her arm and dragged her inside, the grand entry hall gleaming with polished marble floors and crystal chandeliers.

Without a word, he shoved her into a lavishly furnished room.

Inside stood Harlan Drake, phone in hand. The moment he saw her, his eyes narrowed.

He ended his call with a curt, "I'll call you back."

Hanks stood at attention. "Sir, this is Sophia Lancaster. The man who injured your son is Alex-her ex-husband. She knows everything about him. She can bring him here with a single phone call."

Harlan waved a dismissive hand, and Hanks hurried out without another word.

The door clicked shut behind him.

"So," Harlan said, his tone quiet but loaded, "you're Ms. Lancaster. You're exactly as stunning as they said. No wonder my useless son fought over you."

Sophia swallowed hard. "Sir Drake," she managed, voice unsteady "how is

"He's crippled," Harlan answered flatly. He motioned toward the sofa

"Crippled?" Her voice cracked, eyes going wide.

your son doing?"

"Sit," Harlan said, his stare hard. "I don't hit women-generally. You don't need to fear me if you don't give me a reason."

Sophia lowered herself onto the sofa, every motion laced with caution.

Her thin nightgown clung to her shape, offering her no sense of comfort.

Harlan's gaze flicked over her, assessing.

He settled in next to her, the cushions shifting beneath his solid frame.

His hand reached for her smartwatch, curling around it with controlled force. "Call him," he ordered.

Sophia hesitated, fear twisting in her gut.

"Don't make me force you," he said, cold and clipped. "Because if have to hurt you, it won't just be one broken bone."

Sophia's hands shook as she activated the watch, connecting to Alex.

Far across town, Alex was driving through the city with Jasmine in the passenger seat, neon lights bleeding across the

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At the sight of Sophia's call, he tapped the speaker,

"What?" His tone was sharp, bracing himself for whatever came text.

But it wasn't Sophia's voice that came over the line.

"You bastant," a thunderous male voice snapped, "I'm sending you an address. You better show."

"Who is this?" Alex barked.

"The father of the man you attacked," Harlan growled. "Sophia's with me. that way. I want to see the man who nearly killed my son."

Alex's jaw clenched. "If you hurt her-

safe for now. Come alone if you want to keep her

Before he could finish, Jasmine cut in, voice crackling through the speaker. "You're threatening someone under Kingston protection! Are you so stupid you don't realize Kingston will come and destroy every last one of you if you harm her?"

Harlan's tone hardened. "Who's that screeching in the background?" "Jasmine Kingston," she snarled.

He gave a dark chuckle. "So your little friend is a Kingston man, is he? Well, I don't care if he's your favorite toy. I want his head."

"You'd better release Sophia," Jasmine spat. "If you don't, Kingston will tear your fortress apart."

"I'm eager to see you try," Harlan said with a sneer. "And if you manage to get inside these walls, I'll line the driveway with the bodies of your people."

Jasmine's anger flared. "Stay right where you are. We're coming. "I'm not going anywhere," Harlan said evenly, then ended the call

Jasmine turned to Alex, her face etched with worry.

"I'll gather all the Kingston allies," she said, the threat of fear evident in her eyes.

Alex pulled the car to a sharp stop in front of the Golden Mansion.

He stepped out, then opened the passenger door for Jasmine.

She stood looked ready to protest, but he pressed a gentle finger to her lips.

"I know you want to protect me," he said softly. "But it's already too late for that. Do me a favor: rest."

Jasmine's knees seemed to buckle as if his words had stripped her of the will to fight.

He held her close, letting her trembling body lean into his strength "I can handle this on my own."

Inside the mansion, Harlan punched a number into his phone.

"Kyle, gather all our men. Tonight, we end this with Kingston. If we prevail, their entire Vancouver will fall under our control."

He snapped his phone shut, then turned his attention back to Sophia. She was still seated on the sofa, trembling, her neck pale in the overhead light. Harlan reached out, brushing a calloused finger along the column of her throat. "So tell me," he said, voice turning cold, "how exactly are you going to fix this situation?"

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Sophia couldn't speak. Her thoughts spun in panic, and she hated how her fear radiated off her in waves of ruthless amusement.

fuel for Harlan's

Without warning, he seized the neckline of her nightgown and ripped it apart,

leaving her bare but for a thin layer of lace

"What what are you doing?" Sophia gasped, scrambling to cover herself.

A small, cruel smile curved Harlan's lips.

"I haven't decided yet," he said, clamping a hand around her chin. His eyes gleamed with dark intent. "I see a beautiful, privileged woman and suddenly I want to break every piece of that perfection."

He ran his thumb along her lip. "Use that mouth to please me. Do, and maybe I'll

let you walk out of here in one piece."

Terror clenched Sophia's heart, but she refused to give in.

She lunged for a glass ashtray on the table, smashing it into the side of Harlan's

face.

He barely flinched, just wiped away the blood trickling from a small cut on his

cheek. "What do you think you're doing?"

She swung again, landing another hit.

Anger flared in Harlan's eyes, and with a low growl, he shoved her.

He miscalculated his own strength, and she slammed against a wooden table

before collapsing in a silent, unconscious heap.

"Dammit," Harlan snarled, flipping open his phone again. He barked an order, and within seconds a maid stepped inside.

"Yes, Sir Drake?"

He glared at Sophia's prone form. "Take her to my bedroom. Make sure she doesn't leave. I'm not done with her yet."

"Yes, sir." The maid quickly gathered Sophia in her arms and carried her away.

Outside, headlights raked across the mansion's grand facade. More and more vehicles pulled up, disgorging men who fanned out over the expansive gardens. Over three hundred of Harlan Drake's fighters awaited the oncoming storm, armed and ready for the final showdown with Kingston.

Yet, only one man emerged from the shadows of the night, stepping into the mansion's grand entrance.

With a weary sigh, he murmured, "Violence is never the answer... until it becomes the only answer."

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THE who has overcome his fears will truly be free."

Aristotle

As Alex strolled into the old mansion all by himself, he couldn't help but notice the bedlam inside.

Thugs milled about in a frenzy, weapons clanking, voices raised.

Some of them were bent over makeshift tables, arguing about their next move; others were testing the edges of their knives and machetes with manic grins

It didn't take a genius to see they'd been summoned in a hurry-half of them still had beer bottles in hand, eyes wild.

Alex paused at the threshold, expression twisted with disgust.

Look at them, he thought, a ragtag bunch of cheap hoodlums chasing the next payday.

To them, he was just another face in the crowd-nothing special. They hardly paid him any mind.

"You sure Kingston's men will come?" a tall, wiry guy asked, voice threaded with a jittery excitement.

"Damn right they will," sneered another, stroking the blade of a freshly-sharpened machete.

"We're going to war. Tonight, we take all of Vancouver."

"Let's butcher every last one of 'em!" someone else roared. "They send a hundred, we send 'em back in body bags."

A wave of mad laughter rippled through the hall.

"I heard every Kingston is headed our way," an eager voice piped up.

"Why don't we take bets on how many each of us can kill?" a rat-faced thug jeered, eyes alight with glee.

A potbellied man with a nose ring nudged his buddy, jerking a thumb at Alex.

"Get a load of that skinny kid," he snorted. "Hey, twig boy, you lookin' to join our little bloodbath pool?"

"He's so scrawny," the friend chimed in, swigging beer from a can "Surprised he hasn't been offed already."

A round of mocking chuckles rose up, echoing in the vaulted foyer

"When we're done, I'm grabbing all the Rolexes and gold chains off those dead Kingston bastards," bragged a weasel-faced man, eyes glittering with greed.

Across them, someone methodically scraped a whetstone over a blade, metal whining under the pressure.

"This is my first time killing anyone," the thug announced proudly, voice shaking with a deadly excitement. "I'm going for a pentakill."

Another was tinkering with a tripod and camera, clearly determined to catch every drop of blood on film.

Alex tuned them out. His mind locked on one priority: Sophia.

Without so much as a glance at the rowdies, he headed straight for the looming mansion at the estate's center.

At the entrance stood two guards, both built like brick walls, arms crossed over their chests.

"Halt," one barked. "This is Boss Harlan's place. Scram, or you'll regret it."

"He summoned me," Alex said coolly. "Take it up with him if you've got a problem." The guards exchanged a doubtful look.

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Boss called you, huh?" the second one growled, raking his gaze in Alex's shoes to his hair.

That's right," Alex replied calmly, not budging. "If you don't believe me, you can turn me away. See how that goes for you." The first guard snorted.

"Let him through. If he's lying, he won't last three seconds inside

He stepped aside with a crooked grin.

"Go on, kid. But don't say I didn't warn you. The boss is in a foul mood-Jasper's flask has him breathing fire. You might wanna make your peace with God before you head in."

Alex brushed past them with a measured stride, tossing a quiet reply over his shoulder.

"Not planning on dying tonight, thanks."

He barely made it down the hallway before nearly colliding with a maid balancing a tray of drinks. She looked startled, cheeks flushing when her eyes landed on his face.

"P-pardon me," she stammered, fighting to keep the tray level.

"No worries," Alex said, voice clipped but polite. "I'm looking for Harlan. He sent for me. Where is he?"

Her blush deepened.

"I-I'll show you..."

Leading him down a long, dim corridor, she stopped at an imposing set of double doors.

"Master Harlan's study," she whispered. "But... he's in a terrible mood over what happened with Jasper, so please knock gently."

"Thanks," Alex said with a slight nod.

She hovered a second too long, clearly fishing for any scrap of small talk, but Alex's attention was glued to the door.

Disappointed, she scurried off.

Alex raised his hand to knock, paused, then smirked.

Instead of knocking, he slammed his foot into the door, sending it crashing open so hard the hinges screamed.

"Who the hell-!" came a furious roar from inside.

Alex stepped into the room, eyes calm and cold.

"Who the hell what?" he fired back, voice dripping with mockery.

Behind a massive desk stood Harlan: a thick-necked man with the swagger of a self-made tyrant. His fists clenched at the audacity.

"Who are you?" he growled, eyes dark with rage.

Alex feigned a wounded look.

"You call me here and already forgot who I am? That stings, big guy."

A glimmer of realization dawned in Harlan's eyes.

"You're Alex, the one who stirred up a hornet's nest with my boy. How'd you get past my men?"

Alex shrugged, flicking dust off his sleeve.

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"oh I don't know. Guess your entire army of grunts Isn't exactly- tler. Most of fern barely looked at me some even gave me directions

Harlan's nostrils flared.

He was used to people trembling when they stepped foot in his domain. But this kid?

Completely fearless.

It was like he was strolling into a convenience store to pick up milk.

"What are you?" Harlan murmured, an uneasy flutter in his stomach.

Something about Alex radiated danger—an invisible aura that prickled the hairs at the back of his neck.

He remembered what it was like to stand near Jericho Kane, that legendary terror whose mere presence made him sweat bullets.

But Alex was somehow worse, and Harlan's heart drummed with real fear.

Alex dropped onto a leather couch as if he owned the place.

"Let's just say I'm in another league," he answered lazily, eyes narrowing. "Now, cut the crap. Where's Sophia?"

Harlan swallowed, trying not to choke on his own tension.

"She's... she's in my bedroom," he said, voice shaking.

Something lethal flickered behind Alex's eyes.

The air in the room felt like a blade pressed against Harlan's throat.

"You touch her?" Alex asked, voice calm but heavy with the promise of violence.

"No, I—I didn't lay a finger on her!" Harlan blurted, hands lifting in defense.

Alex's gaze stayed razor-sharp.

"Then explain why you dragged me out here. Let's hear it."

Harlan opened his mouth, but no words came. The silence was suffocating, his mind a tangled mess of fear.

Alex leaned forward, impatience snapping in his voice.

"You wanted answers about what happened to your son, right?"

Harlan cleared his throat, forcing himself to speak.

"Yes... yes, that's right."

In a flash, Alex's expression hardened.

"Kneel."

A crushing force that felt almost supernatural pummeled Harlan to his knees.

His arms trembled under the weight, sweat beading on his forehead.

"Your son decided to throw a wild tantrum at someone else's banquet," Alex said, circling him like a predator.

"Did you never teach him manners?"

Harlan's tongue felt heavy, words stumbling out.

"L... L..."

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Alex placed a hand on Harlan's broad shoulder, but there was no comfort in that touch only the cold promise of who held the upper hand.

Seeing the once-mighty gangster crumble like a schoolyard bully faced with a true fighter was almost pitiful.

"You think Vermont's lord backing you makes you top dog?" Alex hissed near his car.

"Don't forget Kingston's got the King behind him. Would you like to die under the King's wrath-right alongside Jericho Kane?"

A jolt of sheer terror shot through Harlan.

Jericho Kane's name already turned his guts to ice, but the King? That was a

whole new level of nightmare. He felt like a man who'd bet his life savings on a rigged game, only to realize the dealer was the devil himself. "I... I'm sorry..." he choked out, voice barely above a

whisper. His knees shook, breath coming in ragged gasps. Gone was the brash gangster who lorded over half the city. Now, he looked more like a child caught in a monster's claw.

Today's Bonus Offer

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The people who play with fire will get burned," Alex said, his tone cold. "And people who play with fear will find fear coming to take their life."

"I heard you've been spreading fear across Vancouver to make people know who you are," Alex said, narrowing his eyes. "I don't dare!" Harlan stammered, trembling.

"If only you spent your time being kind and waited for it to come back to you, you'd be the happiest person on Earth," Alex said, positioning his thumb and middle finger to flick Harlan's forehead

"Next time when you're born, please, be a good person."

"Please....." Harlan whispered, his voice barely audible.

Alex flicked his fingers.

Suddenly, Harlan felt nothing-only darkness.

His body collapsed to the ground, lifeless. Inside, his brain had already turned to mush.

Alex sighed wearily and walked out of the study room.

Without needing confirmation, he could feel Sophia's presence in one of the large rooms.

Beyond a towering wooden door, the lavish scent of expensive candles filled a spacious bedroom.

Sophia lay asleep on an oversized bed, wearing only lingerie.

Her hair spread out across the pillows in a cascade of soft curls, her face calm in the hush of dreams.

Alex approached quietly.

Despite his guarded nature, a twinge of tenderness flickered inside him at the sight of her vulnerability.

He opened an ornate wardrobe, pulled out a set of silk pajamas, and draped them gently over her.

Then, with deliberate care, he gathered her into his arms.

She barely stirred, the deep rise and fall of her chest marking her slumber.

By the window, silver moonlight poured in, illuminating the room in a gentle glow.

Alex, pressing his hand against the frame, stepped out into the open air-then, with a whisper of power, lifted them both into flight.

Cold wind brushed past, carrying the distant sounds of the city.

Outside, the moon hung high in the sky, casting its silver glow over Vancouver.

Sophia stirred and slowly opened her eyes.

Her gaze, still hazy, landed on Alex. "Where are we?" she murmured.

"Flying above Vancouver," Alex replied.

She looked down at the breathtaking cityscape, her expression softening with wonder instead of fear.

She turned her gaze to Alex, studying him intently.

"What?" Alex asked, his tone gruff but curious, as he flew toward her apartment.

"You're so handsome," Sophia said suddenly, wrapping her arms around his neck,

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Alex froze for a moment, startled. This wasn't like her usual self.

"I'm sorry," she whispered. "I'm sorry for hurting you."

"Don't worry about it," he said, his voice quieter now.

"I never really hated you," she admitted.

"I just hated myself-hated how I could never make the right decisions for my own life."

"Then start making decisions instead of doubting yourself. Doubt kills more dreams and happiness than you realize," Alex said, glancing at her.

"Do you love me, Alex?" she asked softly.

"Why ask?" he replied, keeping his eyes on the city below.

Sophia looked at the dark sky, the moon, and the stars twinkling above them.

"Sometimes, I think about just accepting you as my husband and living happily. You know, you wouldn't have to work-just stay home, take care of our children, and I'd handle the rest."

"I'm a good chef," Alex said with a smirk.

Sophia giggled softly. "Yeah, I bet you are."

The two of them drifted in silence for a while, the night air wrapping them in its stillness.

"Sometimes," she said finally, "I think it's really easy to fall in love with you."

"Then you can fall in love with me," Alex said, smiling softly.

"Nope," Sophia sighed, reaching out to touch his cheek.

"There's a lot I have to think about-my parents, society's view of our relationship, our future. Too many things to consider."

"Then don't," Alex said simply.

Sophia's eyes turned misty. "If only I could just follow my heart without worrying about what people might think, everything would be so easy."

Taking the initiative, she leaned in and kissed Alex-softly at first, then with growing emotion, smooth and filled with love.

Their kiss lingered, the quiet night enveloping them.

"What was that for?" Alex asked, his voice low and steady.

Sophia gazed into his eyes. "If I hurt you, will you keep loving me?"

"If I chase you away, will you keep coming back to me?"

"If I get angry at you, will you forgive me?"

"Why?" he asked, his brow furrowing slightly.

"Because it feels so right to love you," she admitted.

"It's like my heart already knows you, like I've known you forever. And it promises me happiness if I'm with you."

"You're truly different," Alex sighed, thinking of how she'd treated him before.

"This is my dream," Sophia said, her voice trembling slightly.

"A place where I don't need my brain to cage my heart. I feel free."

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"A dream," Alex repeated, his tone heavy with thought.

"A beautiful dream," Sophia added, gazing at the city lights below them.

"The best dream-flying above the towering sky of the city."

She leaned forward, pressing her forehead to his and feeling his breathing "Promise me you'll forgive me when I hurt you. I never mean to."

"Okay," Alex replied quietly.

"Promise me you'll never leave, even if I push you away."

"Fine."

"Promise me, no matter what I do, you'll never hate me."

"Alright."

"And one more thing," she whispered, her voice barely audible. "I'm not as strong as you think. Sometimes, I cry alone in bed because life feels so hard. Could you... give me more attention?"

"You always hate when I try to give you attention," Alex pointed out.

"But I still like it," she said, a small smile playing on her lips.

"Fine," Alex agreed with a sigh.

"And don't get close to Jasmine," she added suddenly.

"Why?" he asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Because I hate myself and how I feel when I see you two together. It hurts-it's painful, it's killing me." Sophia admitted, her voice breaking slightly.

She looked into his eyes and kissed him softly.

"You have to promise to love me and only me. And never leave me

Alex shook his head, a faint smile tugging at his lips. "Go to sleep.

Sophia smiled, her eyes growing heavy as sleep overtook her.

Alex floated alone in the dark sky, the cool wind brushing against him. Complicated feelings churned within him.

At dawn, when the first rays of sun slipped through the curtains of Sophia's apartment, she stirred awake.

Sitting up in her bed, she pressed a hand to her temple, then her fingers drifted to her lips.

"I was flying," she murmured, a soft, dreamy smile curving her mouth. "It felt so real..."

Outside her window, Vancouver sparkled under the early morning glow, oblivious to the night's quiet magic.

For a long moment, Sophia simply sat there, hugging a pillow to her chest, filled with a warmth she couldn't quite name.

And somewhere in the city, Alex watched the same sunrise, burdened by his own

regrets yet carrying a fragile hope in his heart

-one that only someone like Sophia could have sparked.

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The previous night.

A restless moon hung over Vancouver that night, casting a pale glow across the cramped apartment block where Marco Ashford arrived in a breathless rush.

His heart thudded louder than his footsteps, though he kept his face carefully composed.

Inside, Florence stood in the faint hallway light, her cheeks streaked with tears, her shoulders trembling.

"Florence, what happened?" he asked, mustering his best tone of concern.

She clutched at his arm, her grip so tight it hurt.

"Marco-oh God-my daughter! They took Sophia! You've got to help her!"

Marco forced a sympathetic frown, fighting the guilt that coiled in his stomach.

"Who took her?" he asked quietly, even though the answer was already gnawing at him.

He'd sold Sophia's address to Hans, and the shame of that betrayal pressed like a cold stone against his chest.

Florence's voice cracked, her tears renewing. "I-I don't know. It was so fast. Please, Marco-you have connections, you can do something!"

He nodded, placing a hand on her shoulder.

"Take it easy," he said softly, sounding smoother than he felt. "I'll call my people. I promise they'll find Sophia. Nothing will happen to her."

Florence let out a shaky breath, clinging to his reassurance as though it were the only thing keeping her upright.

"Thank you," she whispered, eyes red and desperate. "You are the only one I believe."

Stepping aside, Marco pretended to dial a number, anxiety tightening his gut.

Returning to her, he wore the mask of a grim messenger.

"I got some news," he said heavily. "Harlan Drake is after Sophia because of Alex. He attacked Drake's prince. Jasper's in the hospital." He paused, letting the gravity of the words sink in.

"Drake's out for blood."

Florence's knees nearly gave out. "My baby... my Sophia..." The heartbreak on her face made Marco's throat close up.

"Don't worry," he lied, gentling his voice. "I've got people on it. She'll be safe, I swear." As he spoke, the hope twisted his

stomach.

Part of him silently wished the entire mess-Alex, Sophia, all of it would just vanish.

His life depended on it.

When the axe entered the forest, the trees said, "The handle is one of us.'

Elsewhere in Vancouver, the tension was a physical thing, crackling through the air like static.

At one of Harlan Drake's nightclubs, about thirty men stomped inside, assault rifles drawn and ready.

Their leader, wearing a harsh scowl, confronted the two guards at the door.

"We're Vancouver Security. This place is ours now," he said, voice low and menacing. "You gonna stand aside, or fight?"

The guards exchanged uneasy glances.

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They were big men, but they weren't stupid. Most of Drake's crew had been diverted to the mansion, leaving them hopelessly outnumbered.

One guard cleared his throat. "This is Harlan Drake's territory," he said, stepping back. "You think you can just walk in and

claim it?"

A sneer flickered across the intruders' faces.

"Harlan's going down tonight," the leader snarled: "Join us or die. Your call."

The guard hesitated, sweat beading on his forehead. "Same salary as Harlan?" he asked, a pitiful attempt at stalling.

"Same salary," one of Carlos's men said, shrugging. "Suit up with us, or get out of our way."

And just like that, Drake's nightclub fell without a single bullet fire.

Meanwhile, Carlos and his new crew waged a swift, brutal takeover across the city.

Drake's loan shark office went under, then his security building, then his many shady outsourcing businesses.

They all toppled one after another, the guards at each location given the same three options: submit, flee, or bleed on the pavement.

Most chose the first two.

All this carnage and betrayal filtered back to Hugo, one of Drake's most trusted soldiers.

Outside the Harlan's Mansion, he paced like a caged animal.

"What the hell are Carlos's people playing at?" he muttered, slamming his fist on car door. "They will go down after Kingston!"

Unable to stand the reports any longer, Hugo marched to Harlan's study room.

He knocked once, twice, but got no answer.

"Boss," he called, forcing the door open, "we've got an emergen-

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He froze, his stomach lurching. Harlan Drake lay on the rug, eyes vacant, blood trickling from every opening in his head.

For a long moment, Hugo couldn't even breathe. He walked to Harlan's side.

"Boss?" he whispered, though he already knew.

He felt for a pulse-nothing.

"Dead," he choked, as if saying the word would break him. "He's dead..."

Suddenly, Hans appeared, breathless and frantic.

"Boss! The cops are coming with Kingston's crew. We need to-"His words died on

his lips when he spotted Harlan's body.

Fear twisted his face into something wild.

"Hugo killed Harlan!" he blurted, stumbling back. "He betrayed us!"

Then he tore down the hall before Hugo could stop him, his voice echoing through the mansion.

"Hugo killed the boss!"

"Hans, wait!" Hugo roared, giving chase, but Hans burst through the front doors, broadcasting his accusation to the crowd of three hundred men assembled outside.

"Harlan's dead! Hugo did it!" Hans shouted, fear and desperation fueling his lie.

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The reaction was immediate-a ripple of shock and confusion spread through the mob.

Then somebody bellowed, "Carlos's men are taking all our bases!hey're cleaning us out!"

A third voice yelled, "The police are coming with Kingston's people! Five minutes out!"

In seconds, the men turned from a loyal army into a panicked swarm, eyes darting left and right for an escape route. One cry cut through the mayhem: "Who's gonna pay us now?! If Harlan's dead, there's no money!"

That sealed it.

They weren't about to risk their lives for a corpse with empty pockets.

Like a dam bursting, the crowd broke formation.

Men scrambled for their bikes, their cars, or the safety of dark alleys-anywhere but here.

Hugo stumbled outside, hopelessly watching as the kingdom he'd dedicated two decades to crumbled before his eyes.

They'd planned to fight for power, for wealth, for Jericho Kane's favor.

Instead, they were scattering like roaches when the light flips on.

Why? Hugo wondered bitterly, stepping aside to avoid getting run over by a fleeing SUV.

All this... because Harlan tried to kidnap a single woman.

The reality hit him like a punch to the gut. Twenty years of loyalty gone in one night.

The mansion he'd once seen as a fortress of prestige now stood hollow, just another empty husk in a world that kept turning no matter how many dreams lay shattered.

He cast one last look at the lifeless building.

Twenty years-years of unwavering loyalty, countless sacrifices, and even the scars of taking bullets for Harlan-had crumbled into nothing.

What once seemed unshakable, a bond forged in blood and trust, now felt like a cruel illusion.

"What a shitty life," he breathed, feeling every syllable like glass in his throat.

Then he climbed into his car and drove away without glancing back, leaving broken promises and the ghost of the man he used

to be.

The headlights illuminated a lonely stretch of road, stretching into a future that no longer made sense.

Yet Hugo pressed the accelerator, forcing himself onward.

The sky may shatter, the world may crumble, and all of hell may rise, but as long

as life endures, a man must press forward.

No matter how heavy the burden or how searing the pain, this is the essence of life-unforgiving yet undeniable.

To live as a man is to carry on, not because it is easy, but because it is necessary.

This is the only path, the struggle, and the silent strength that defines existence.

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The next morning, Alex stood outside Sophia's apartment, clutching a carefully chosen bouquet of flowers.

White tulips, symbolizing forgiveness and a fresh start, nestled next to delicate pink roses, which spoke of gentle love and gratitude.

Among them were blue hyacinths, a heartfelt apology captured in their soft blooms, all tied together with ivy, a symbol of

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commitment and enduring bonds.

He had spent hours selecting the flowers, hoping their meanings would express

the emotions he struggled to put into words. "Maybe, just maybe, he could start fresh with Sophia," he thought as he stood there, his heart heavy with both hope and nerves.

Today's Bonus Offer

GET IT NOW

The Almighty Dominance - Chapter 135[1,173 words]

Chapter 135 Chapter 135

Inside the cramped apartment, Sophia stepped out of her bedroom and practically stumbled over her parents and Megan, all sprawled like dead weights on the

couch.

Then Marco slunk out of the kitchen, clutching a bottle of mineral water like he'd just stolen it.

He froze the instant he saw Sophia-like he was staring at an unwelcome ghost. The bottle slipped from his grip and fell on the floor, water splashing everywhere. "S-Sophia... how can you be here?" he gasped, sounding as if he might keel over at any moment. Panic churned in his gut.

His eyes flicked to a kitchen knife lying on the counter-grim thoughts swirling in his head. Did she know?

Did she know I sold her out?

Should I just grab that knife and make sure she never talks?

He swallowed hard, then looked at all people on the couch and started to panic.

Maybe I'd have to shut them all up...

"What do you mean?" Sophia's voice cut through his spiraling thoughts.

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"I-I heard the Drakes kidnapped you," he blurted, voice unsteady. It felt like a poor attempt at acting clueless.

Sophia creased her brow. "Kidnapped? So, it was real?" she muttered, confusion twisting her features.

"Your parents said they came and took you," Marco pressed, more demanding this time. "So what happened? How'd you end up here, looking perfectly fine?"

A heavy sigh escaped Sophia's lips, her hands trembling slightly.

"I'm not sure. Harlan shoved me, I blacked out, then... I just woke up here."

Marco's shirt clung to his back, damp with sweat. "Did... did Harlan mention anything about me?" he asked, voice edged with desperation.

Maybe the fool had kept quiet.

Sophia gave him a questioning look. "You? Why on earth would Harlan be talking about you? Is there some kind of feud going on?"

"No!" he snapped too quickly. Then he tried to smooth it over.

"I-I only made a call to someone important to save you from Harlan. Maybe he

got spooked and let you go. Harlan didn't say anything about me or... any of my friends?" Sure, Marco.

Keep spinning tall tales.

If they were going to call him a hero, might as well lean into it.

Before Sophia could press further, Florence jolted awake, startled by the sound of the dropped bottle.

She bolted from the couch and nearly strangled Sophia in a hug, tears streaming down her face as Justin stumbled over to join the family huddle.

"Sophia, oh thank God!" Florence sobbed, scanning her daughter from head to toe like she expected to find bruises or broken bones.

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"They didn't hurt you, did they?"

"I'm... fine," Sophia insisted softly, though her voice shook. "But Honestly, I have no idea how I got here."

"What are you talking about?" Florence demanded. "You're saying you woke up in your own bed with no clue who brought you back?"

Sophia nodded, she didn't know Alex had flown in through a window on the twentieth floor-a stunt straight out of a bad action

flick.

"Marco, it must've been your friend," Florence turned to him, vole practically quivering with accusation.

"Did you unlock the door while we were asleep? They must've carried Sophia in. Why didn't you wake us so we could thank them properly?"

Sophia's eyes widened. Marco blinked like a deer in headlights.

"Yes!" Florence cried, hugging Sophia again.

"Sophia, you've got to thank Marco. The second he heard, he charged over here and called his big-shot friends to save you. It's all because of him!"

Sophia hesitated a spark of doubt clearly in her eyes.

Still, with her parents prodding her, she forced a small nod. "Right... thank you," she said, voice thick with reluctance.

Marco's expression lit up in a smug grin.

"No big deal," he drawled, like it was all part of his daily hero routine. Inside, he was crowing with relief-and taking every ounce of credit.

Megan came barreling over next, flinging her arms around Sophia.

"I prayed for you all night!" she cried, tears streaming. "Thank God Marco's people showed up! I don't know what would've happened if-if-" She trailed off and turned bright eyes on Marco.

"Honestly, you're like some prince in shining armor."

"Yeah... I just did what I had to." Marco puffed out his chest.

Deep down, he marveled at his own luck: who would've thought betraying Sophia would end with him being celebrated?

Suddenly, the doorbell rattled everyone out of their illusions.

"I'll get it!" Megan called, dashing over. She yanked the door open, face twisting with immediate rage.

"You!" she hissed, pointing a furious finger. "Look at what you've done, you scumbag! You nearly got Sophia killed!" Sophia, startled, hurried to the door. There stood Alex, gripping a bouquet of flowers like some pathetic apology.

He looked miserable and determined all at once.

"Here he is!" Megan spat, seething with contempt.

"The reason you got snatched! The reason for every miserable thing that's happened to you, and now he shows up with this cheap attempt at forgiveness?"

She grabbed the flowers from his hands and threw them down, stomping the petals into a sad, shredded mess.

"Can you believe this guy?" Megan raged. "He's lucky Marco came to the rescue! Otherwise, who knows what would've happened to Sophia?"

Alex's eyes narrowed, flicking from Megan to Sophia.

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"Marco saved Sophia?" he repeated in disbelief.

"Yes, he did!" Megan barked. "It sure wasn't you, the one who started this nightmare in the first place!"

Alex turned a glare on Marco. "Seriously? You're taking credit for some grand rescue?"

Marco smirked, letting every ounce of smugness ooze out.

"Yep. Gotta clean up your mess, friend. Because of you and your plful grudge against Jasper, Harlan found out about Sophia and her family. It's all on you."

Florence stormed in, lugging a bucket of water.

She hurled it at Alex with vicious satisfaction, soaking him head to toe. "You're the scum who put my son in the hospital!" she screeched, face twisting with rage.

"You brought those maniacs here to terrorize Justin and me, and now they've kidnapped Sophia! You're a curse on this family- why don't you just go drop dead?"

Dripping and humiliated, Alex stared at Sophia, his heart in his throat.

She said nothing, just bit her lip, eyes swimming with conflict.

It was a thousand times more painful than any of their scorn.

"Sophia..." he began, voice rough. He reached out, but she stepped back.

"Kick him out!" Megan demanded, crossing her arms with all the righteous fury of a hangman.

"He's a walking death sentence," Florence snapped.

Marco sneered, "Don't forget, Sophia-this creep sold you out."

At that, Sophia's gaze shifted, torn and troubled.

Finally, in a wavering voice, she spoke: "Alex, you... you should leave. Now."

The words landed on Alex like a punch to the gut. He swallowed hard, fists clenched.

But her downcast eyes hurt more than any insult thrown his way. He turned and headed for the door.

As he stepped past the scattered petals, Megan ground her foot on them again, as if to make the point that any hope of forgiveness was well and truly crushed.

The cloying scent of bruised flowers mingled with the bitter tension in the air- sealing Alex's disgrace and leaving Sophia's heart silently aching.

"In life, we vowed to share the same pillow;

In death, we swore to share the same grave.

If only we had never met,

There would be no grief in parting."

The Almighty Dominance - Chapter 136[1,108 words]

Chapter 136

Ale's had barely stepped out of the apartment when his phone buzzed.

Carlos was on the line, and he sounded frantic.

"Sir, there is an emergency," Carlos blurted.

"What now?" Alex snapped, bracing himself for bad news.

"We've taken Harlan's mansion and scooped up all his intel. Turns out he's been dealing with Jericho Kane."

"I already know that. Give me something new."

"Harlan's also joined forces with Charles Kingston."

"What?" Alex's tone darkened.

"He's selling his sister, Jasmine, to seal Kingston's leadership-with Harlan and Jericho backing him."

"Are you certain?" Alex demanded.

"Kelly went to confront Charles at his mansion. It's been two hours... no word from her. We think something's gone wrong, I'm requesting permission to storm the place and get her out."

"Don't bother," Alex cut in, his voice like ice.

"I'll handle this myself. If they've hurt her, I swear I'll kill Charles with my own hands. "

"Yes, sir," Carlos said, then the line went dead.

Alex glanced at the sky, a muscle jumping in his jaw. Power crackled through him,

and in one explosive burst, he leapt into the air and vanished.

A heartbeat later, Sophia appeared from behind the building.

She looked around, confusion etched on her face.

"He was here a second ago," she whispered, frustration welling up. "How does he always vanish so fast?"

Guilt gnawed at her.

Alex had been doing everything he could to free her from Jasper, yet everything had spiraled into chaos.

Maybe he'd hoped to apologize to her, but it wasn't even his fault in the first place.

Earlier, in front of her parents, Marco and Megan, Sophia couldn't find the courage to stand up for Alex as everyone blamed him.

Now, slipping away from them, she was determined to find Alex and apologize.

"He definitely went this way. How could he just... vanish?" Sophia murmured, her chest tightening with an uneasy dread.

This time, it felt like Alex might truly walk away from her, and the thought was unbearable.

"Sophia, you're so stupid," she whispered to herself.

A few hours before, Kelly had barreled down the road toward the Kingston mansion, rage pounding in her veins.

She slammed her car to a stop, then burst into Charles's study with murder in her eyes.

"Kelly," Charles said, standing stiff by his desk. "Why the sudden visit?"

Kelly stomped over and threw a smartwatch onto the table, glaring at him. "Explain this."

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Charles barely glanced at it. "What is it?"

"Harlan's watch," she shot back. "Enough games, I know you've teamed up with the Drakes to bring down your own family, all behind Jasmine's back!".

Charles let out a slow, mocking laugh. "Wow, did you rim all the way here? You're dripping with sweat."

He wrinkled his nose. "That sweet smell of yours... It's a little too much."

Picking up a nearby perfume bottle, he rolled it between his fingers before spraying a burst of it right in front of her, like a bully tormenting a defenseless animal

"Don't change the subject!" Kelly yelled, her anger sizzling.

Charles exhaled, stepping closer. "I'm the Kingston firstborn. Everything was supposed to be mine-Vancouver's entire legacy. But somehow, it's all going to Jasmine."

"It's your father's call!" Kelly retorted.

His voice turned soft, dangerously so. "Kelly, I've loved you for five years. I've tried everything to make you mine, yet you keep standing by Jasmine. Why?"

"Because she's better," Kelly hissed without blinking.

Charles shook his head. "You think that's the reason? No. I've been too easygoing for too long. That ends now. I'm done letting anyone tell me what I can or can't have."

"You're unhinged," Kelly spat.

Charles leaned in, eyes glinting with something cruel. "No, I'm finally wide awake. And I'm going to take what's mine. Starting with you, Kelly. You know how I feel about you."

"Love can't be forced, you maniac!" Kelly roared. "I'll tell your father everything. Let's see you worm your way out of that!"

She spun on her heel, but before she reached the door, her vision swam, and she crumpled.

Her heart pounded with sudden horror. She realized it too late-the perfume.

It was a drug.

Charles crouched beside her, lifting her chin with a casual cruelty. "A little gift from Jericho Kane. Harlan gave it to me as a show of good faith."

Kelly's vision blurred. She felt something hard pressed between her lips.

A pill. She twisted her head, spitting it out, but Charles seized her jaw and slugged her in the gut.

"You'll swallow it," he growled. "And then you'll accept me as your master."

She felt the pill dissolving on her tongue, a bitter tang clinging to the back of her throat.

"You bastard!" she gasped.

"Fight it all you want," Charles sneered. "You'll be begging for me soon enough."

Summoning every last shred of will, Kelly shoved him off and hurled herself toward the nearest window.

She crashed through, shards of glass exploding in the air.

Pain tore at her skin, but she landed hard outside and started running.

"Damn it! Second floor!" Charles shouted, dumbfounded. She wasn't supposed to have the strength to escape.

Two guards charged in. "Young Master, is something wrong?"

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"Kelly stole something from me!" Charles barked. "Bring her back Now!"

Kelly careened down the road, her grip on the wheel slipping as waves of heat surged through her.

The drug was an aphrodisiac, and it seared through her veins with relentless fire.

"That filthy bastard," she muttered through clenched teeth.

Her focus wavered as her body fought against the drug's effects.

Suddenly her head reeled as a truck's horn thundered in her ears.

She jerked the wheel, lost control, and her car screeched across the pavement toward the guardrail.

-rattling jolt.

It slammed to a halt, wedged against the metal with a teeth-

Before she could breathe, another car barreled out of nowhere, plowing into her.

The guardrail gave way, and her vehicle careened down a steep embankment. Branches whipped at the windows, cracking the hood, until she crashed headlong into a towering tree.

The airbag exploded, smashing her back against the seat.

Pain ripped through her ribs, burning in her lungs. Rain trickled in through the shattered windshield, and the scent of wet earth clung to twisted steel.

Suddenly, two figures appeared, yanking open her door. One seized her arm and snarled,

"Kelly, you'd better go back to Young Master Charles and return whatever you took."

"I didn't steal anything," she rasped, her voice ragged.

"Then explain yourself," the other snapped, raising a gun. "We're not playing around here, Kelly."

"Neither am I," she shot back, voice trembling but fierce.

In a flash, she pulled out her own weapon and fired twice. The shots cracked through the rain-soaked day, and the men dropped before they could react.

Panting, Kelly realized she was still alive-barely.

But with Charles's men on her trail, time was running short.

She drew a shaky breath, shutting her eyes as she fought to steady her heart.

She will rise, fierce and unbroken, against the tide meant to drown her.

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The Almighty Dominance - Chapter 137[1,049 words]

Two of Charles's men tore down the valley in a frenzy, only to find two vehicles smashed together and pinned by a fallen tree. Sprawled on the ground was a corpse, the sight so grim it turned their stomachs. Instinct jolted them to draw their weapons, scanning every shadow with anxious eyes.

One guard snapped open his radio, voice tight with urgency. "Young Master, Kelly's out of the forest. Two of our guys got

wasted."

Chris's reply exploded through the speaker.

"Are you all braindead? She's poisoned and barely standing, yet you let her slip through? Worthless bastards! Either find her and drag her back, or don't bother coming home!"

"Yes, Sir." The guard's voice was clipped, dread rolling off him in waves. He signaled to the others. "She's weak and poisoned- move it!"

The four men dove into the trees like wolves on the hunt, their fear of failure overshadowed only by their fear of Chris.

Back in the study, Charles stood tall, his tone deceptively calm as he addressed Chris Nolan and Bianca.

"Our dirty laundry's about to hit the wind. I need both of you to get out of here and head straight to Vermont."

Chris tried to argue. "But-"

"No buts." Charles's voice cut like a blade. "If Kelly sings, Jasmine I'll come for me. She could even drag my father into this. You both are dead! I won't let that happen."

He turned to Chris, "You used to be the greatest knight in Vancouver. In Vermont,

I expect you to rise above that-be more than a knight. Be superhuman."

Chris hesitated. "I'm a criminal. The only reason I'm here is because you promised to clear my record."

Asly grin slid across Charles's face. "In Vancouver, you are. In Vermont, you're free as a bird. Jericho Kane rules there, and he'll set you up."

"Fine." Chris grabbed Bianca's arm with a grunt. "We're leaving."

Charles pointed at the door. "The private jet's waiting."

"1

Bianca lingered, glancing back at him. "And what happens to you??"

Charles laughed, low and bitter.

"Me? Even if Jasmine levels accusations, that's all they'll be-accusations. And if I clean this mess properly, she won't have a damn thing but her paranoid fantasies."

Chris and Bianca had scarcely shut the door behind them when Luke and Bill strolled in.

Luke's voice was steeped in contempt. "Pathetic. No wonder your own father passed you over for Jasmine."

Bill cleared his throat, mock concern dripping from his words.

"Luke, mind your manners. It's rude to insult the idiot we're supposed to protect. Even if he's a dimwit, at least keep it subtle."

Luke's lip curled. "Why the hell would I do that?"

A coarse laugh rattled out of Bill. "So he can stay a dimwit forever."

Chris glowered at them both, fury twisting his features.

He knew these two were Jericho Kane's disciples-sent to "protect him-but their loyalty was thinner than paper.

1/3

They held nothing but contempt for all of Kingston

affatp me track down Kelly, Chris said, forcing an icy calm into his voice, "If she escapes, she il unravel everything we've

one

Luke sneered, longing like he owned the place.

"you can't handle one half-dead woman? Must be nice running a worthless hole like Kingston. Maybe Bill and I should just cut out the wait and claim your pathetic city ourselves."

Chris's eyes flared. "Don't underestimate her. She was trained by Father's own elite."

Lake tossed back a cold laugh. "Elite? She'd be dog meat against Vermont fighters."

Charles's composure snapped like a twig. "Then get the fuck unt there and capture her!"

Lake prowled over, clapping Charles on the shoulder hard enough to sting.

"Gladly. You gave her that Aphrodite pill, right? We both know there's only one antidote. When I run into her, I'll enjoy every second with her. Maybe I'll record it for you-give you a front-row seat to her pleasure with me."

Rage turned Charles's face scarlet, his fists shaking at his sides.

Luke's smirk deepened. "You've pined after her for five years, and how you'll

watch another man take her. How pitiful. But don't worry-I'll leave you with her after me if you beg hard enough."

Without a backward glance, Luke vaulted through the second-floor window. A roar of an engine followed as he tore off on a motorcycle, vanishing into the horizon.

Charles stood rooted, shame and fury warring in his veins.

The walls felt like they were closing in, mocking him for every poor decision he'd made.

His father had chosen Jasmine to lead instead of him.

His people had found Chris Nolan first, yet instead of bringing him in, Chris had conspired to siphon billions from Kingston into his own pocket, ensuring Jasmine's control of Vancouver was sabotaged.

But she, resilient and resourceful, had secured a loan and kept Vancouver thriving despite their treachery.

Desperate to shift the balance, Charles grabbed the phone and called Jericho Kane. He wanted the power to usurp Jasmine's claim to Vancouver.

But in the dark corners of his mind, he knew he was shackling himself to the devil.

Their jeers still burned in his ears, calling him weak, impotent, a sad excuse for a man.

He felt his chest tighten as his fists clenched, the ache of humiliation nearly crushing him.

The throne he craved felt miles away.

Yet, the devil's voice whispered insidiously in her mind: "They betrayed you first, Charles. What you're doing is right. It's yours by right!"

"The deepest wounds are not inflicted by swords but by the trust you place in the wrong hands, only for it to strike you in return. You cannot trust your father, nor Jasmine. Trust only yourself and your decisions."

'You are not wrong! They forced your hand to do this!'

"Just wait," he muttered, nails biting into his palms.

"When I reign over Vancouver, I'll do as I please-starting with kicking Jericho Kane's lackeys back to whatever hole they crawled out of."

2/3

Chapter 137

Charles's eyes flicked to Bill, ripe with hatred. Bill noticed and responded in kind.

Before Charles could move or speak, Bill lunged and clamped a colossal hand around his throat, hoisting him clear off the floor

Charles's legs kicked uselessly, panic flooding his vision.

"Stop-what are you

Bill's grip tightened. His voice was cold as a winter wind.

"If you're going to be a puppet, act like one. Don't you dare look at me like that, or

I'll snap your neck."

Charles gurgled, hands scrabbling at Bill's iron grip. "Let... go...'

First, he made his choices. Then, his choices made him.

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He began to lose control of his body and started wetting himself, the yellow liquid pooling at his feet.

The Almighty Dominance - Chapter 138[816 words]

BIT bared his teeth, then drove Charles into the wall with a sickening thud that rattled every pane of glass in the room.

The impact stole what little breath Charles had left; he crumpled to the floor, coughing, violently until tears rimmed his eyes. "Look at you," Bill jeered, lips curled in disgust. "You've pissed yourself, haven't you? Pathetic little coward."

Charles stayed on his knees, shaking so hard he could barely keep Upright

His lungs burned, and his mind spun with shame. All he could do was stare at the polished floor, wishing he could sink into it and vanish.

Bill gave a dismissive snort as he turned to leave.

"You call yourself a man?" he spat, gaze sweeping over Charles with searing contempt. "You're nothing but a piss-soaked dog lying in its own filth."

When Bill finally stalked out, his derisive laughter lingered in the hallway like a rancid smell.

Charles remained where he was, forcing himself to breathe. His chest rose and fell in a ragged rhythm, each breath tugging at the raw ache in his ribs.

Slowly, a voice inside him stirred.

'Be patient, Charles. You might be crawling now, but if you're smart, you'll bide your time and claw your way back to the top. Your father wants to discard you, and Jasmine looks at you like trash. Prove them wrong.'

Charles's trembling hands balled into fists, his nails digging so hard into his palms they threatened to draw blood.

A flicker of ambition sparked in his eyes.

'You'll conquer Vancouver. And Vermont. You'll be the king.'

Alow, unsettling laugh escaped him, soft at first, then louder, echoing in the empty

room.

If you dance with the devil, the devil doesn't change the devil changes you. And soon, you start to forget who you really are.

Far from that tainted estate, Kelly trudged through the dense undergrowth, teeth gritted against the blistering pain.

The Aphrodite poison gnawed at her, threatening to swallow her whole, but her iron will pushed her forward.

"There she is!" one of Kingston's men shouted, spotting her through the trees. Kelly didn't hesitate.

She drew her pistol in one fluid move, firing before he could duck.

The bullet ripped through his skull, and he dropped like a rag doll.

The remaining three sent a hail of gunfire back at her.

Bullets tore through branches and leaves, one striking Kelly's arm.

She staggered with a hoarse cry, vision flickering.

"Grab her!" another voice yelled, spurring his fellow men into a reckless charge.

With blood dribbling down her arm, Kelly bit back the pain and squeezed off three more shots.

Each found its mark, and the men collapsed into the undergrowth. Chapter 138

Her breath rasped in her throat, heart hammering as the venom pulsed inside her veins. A sneering voice slithered out of the shadows. "You really are a wild one, aren't you?" Luke stepped forward, casual and amused, as if surveying prey he finally cornered. Kelly lifted her pistol, but he lashed out with a savage kick that slammed into her wrist.

The gun flew from her grip, clattering against a rock before landing uselessly on the wet ground.

Behind him, two of the Kingston men Kelly had shot groaned in agony-they'd been unlucky enough to get hit but not killed. One moaned, "Help... help me..."

Luke regarded them with a sickly grin, drawing his own gun.

Without warning, he fired a shot into the first man's temple.

Blood splattered across the moss, the man's eyes going blank.

"What are you doing?" the other sputtered, voice choked with terror. "We're on the same side!"

Luke let loose a dark laugh. "Some people are so deep in the dark, they'll set anyone on fire just to watch them burn. Try not to take it personally."

He shrugged. "And honestly? It makes me happy to see you die. No particular reason."

Then he shot the second man point-blank, sending him sprawling in a lifeless heap.

Satisfied, Luke turned back to Kelly, a predatory hunger burning in his gaze.

"You..." His lips curled into a leer. "I've had my eye on you. I always go after what I want."

Kelly's mind wavered, the Aphrodite drug twisting everything in front of her, superimposing Alex's beloved face over Luke's cruel features.

Her heart thundered, torn between revulsion and a forced rush of desire.

"Kiss me," she managed to choke out, voice cracking with desperation.

Luke's grin deepened, a vicious slash of white teeth.

"Oh, I plan to do a hell of a lot more than that."

He grabbed at her clothes, ripping the fabric in his eagerness, eyes glittering with perverse delight.

Kelly trembled, unable to steady the chaos inside her-fear, desire, rage, and the drug's sick pull all warring at once.

She felt the world spin, darkness nipping at the corners of her vision, as Luke loomed over her like a nightmare in flesh and

blood.

Yet Kelly embraced him as if he were a prince from a fairy tale. The drug had finally robbed her of every last shred of

consciousness.

Luke smiled broadly. "Come to me, bitch. I'll make sure you're satisfied with my size!"

Today's Bonus Offer

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The Almighty Dominance - Chapter 139[1,361 words]

Chapter 139

Luke had been born and raised in Vermont, he resented the new monarch.

In his eyes, the rightful successor to the throne was Jericho Kane

no one else deserved that honor after the old king's downfall.

But when the old king lost and fled into hiding in Vermont, Jerich Kane's hunger for power was ignited.

Luke's dislike for the current ruler only grew into seething content.

Standing tall beneath the trees, Luke scowled at Kelly, Jetting hering to him in desperation.

His tone cut through the still air. "You Kingston people-follower of that new king- nothing but maggots and bitches."

The venom in his words reflected the unwavering pride in his eyes

He leaned closer, his voice dripping with arrogance. "I'll show you how a man

from Vermont pleases a maggot and a bitch like you. We are the superior men.' Kelly pressed herself against him, her breathing quick and shallow

A sultry whisper escaped her lips. "Really?"

Before Luke could process her intent, a glint of silver flashed in Kelly's hand.

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In one swift, practiced motion, she drove a short knife into the back of his neck. For an instant, time hung suspended. Luke's eyes went wide with disbelief. He stumbled, pushing Kelly away.

She was flung across the clearing, her body colliding with a tree nearly five meters off.

Then Luke dropped to his knees. Strength deserted him as his mind whirled, trying to understand how everything could shift so

suddenly.

His vision blurred, and he collapsed facedown, each breath shallower than the last.

Kelly trembled, a wave of heat raging from deep within.

She glared at Luke's unmoving form, her voice trembling with quiet fury.

"You bastard," she spat. "Killed by the maggot you despised... you're even lower than that."

Her whole body burned by the poison.

She clutched her head, tortured by a fierce and consuming heat that made movement impossible.

In the midst of that agony, a final wish escaped her shaking lips.

"If only... I could see Alex one last time."

Her eyes fluttered closed, her body succumbing to the searing drug coursing through her veins.

Just when she thought it would swallow her whole, a cool rush of relief began spreading through her hands, up her arms, and into her head.

She opened her eyes to see Alex kneeling over her, his expression etched with desperation.

"You were drugged," he said softly, urgency lacing each word.

"I'm using my energy to expel it, but it'll take time." His face darkened.

"I've encountered this drug before-like what happened to Sophia But now, I can fix it."

1/4

25 BONUS

Kelly Ups parted, her voice trembling. "I know this drug"

Don't talk Alex ordered firmly, "Save your strength."

"I don't need you to save me!" she hissed, a flicker of defiance shining in her eyes even as her body betrayed her.

"What?" Alex's voice rose in alarm, confusion mingling with fear "Are you out of your mind?"

"No." Kelly's voice was raw but steady. "If you save me, then you won't owe me anything. I saved your life once, and if you return the favor, we'll be even. After that... you'll forget me."

She tried pulling her hand from his grasp, but her strength was gone.

"Let me go, Alex. I want you to still owe me," she breathed. "That's the only way you'll keep thinking about me."

"Don't be stubborn!" he snapped, tightening his hold. "You'll die!"

"Then you'll remember me forever," Kelly murmured, letting out shaky, bitter laugh.

Her limbs trembled, her life slipping away moment by moment.

Alex's expression twisted with anguish. "I'm going to save you, Kelly. No matter what happens afterward, it doesn't erase what I owe you."

"No!" she cried, desperation warring with her pain.

He stared at her, torn between anger and heartbreak. "Then what do you want from me? Tell me!"

Her tears fell as she looked up at him, letting the words cut through the space between them. "Make love to me."

Alex froze. For a heartbeat, he simply looked at her, the world spinning in slow motion.

"If you think you owe me because I saved you once," Kelly pleaded, tears tracking down her face, "then make love with me."

Even as he continued to channel his energy into her, Alex's voice broke. "Kelly, listen to yourself. You're not thinking clearly—"

She shook her head, tears glistening.

"I'm not like Jasmine, a princess with everything, or Sophia, beautiful and successful. I'm just me. Plain. I only have these two hands to make it in this world. I've never felt pretty. You never really looked my way." Her voice cracked.

"But my heart has loved you so fiercely... it hurts. It never quits, no matter what I tell myself. It's killing me, Alex."

"Kelly..." he breathed, as if her confession physically struck him.

"I loved you against reason, against promise, against peace, against hope, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be."

"Kelly..."

"Alex, you are my temple, my priest, my prayer, my release. In my sacrifice and loving you, I saw my salvation."

"Don't pity me," she said, trembling but resolute. "I'm strong in my own right. I don't need anyone's pity. Not if you can't truly love me."

His gaze softened, weighed down by guilt and sorrow. "Kelly..."

She inhaled raggedly, forcing the words past her lips. "I saved you once. Now you make love to me, and we'll call it even. You owe me that much."

Alex's voice grew thick with emotion. "That's not fair to you."

"Then let me go," she whispered, tears gathering at the corners of her eyes. "Let me die if you won't."

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He exhaled, leaning in to cradle her cheek with his palm. The want in his touch contrasted sharply with the dread in his eyes. "Kelly, listen..."

She stared back, mesmerized by the tenderness in his gaze.

He finally saw her truly saw her.

Not just a hardworking woman, but a soul whose love for him was as deep and unyielding as any grand romance.

Her beauty was no less dazzling than Sophia's or Jasmine's.

"I can't promise you forever," Alex said quietly, brushing away a tear on her cheek.

"I still need time to figure out everything I'm feeling. But I can promise you three days-three days in which I'll love you with my entire being."

"Three days?" Kelly echoed, disbelief quivering in her voice.

He nodded, resolute. "Three days. You'll be my whole world. Let me learn how to give you all I have."

She stared at him for a long moment, lips trembling, then gave a small nod.

Without hesitating, Alex gathered her up in his arms. "I'm taking you to my private island," he whispered, his breath warm against her ear.

Their journey across the ocean felt both endless and instantaneous, the wind roaring around them.

At last, the turquoise waters gave way to an isolated island ringed by lush greenery.

In its heart stood a modern villa, sleek and cutting-edge, yet in harmony with the wild beauty surrounding it.

The house recognized Alex as they approached, lights glowing to life and the doors sliding open.

Kelly's heart hammered as he carried her inside.

The villa was breathtaking—vast windows opened to rolling jungle vistas on one side and an expanse of glittering sea on the other.

In a spacious bedroom, Alex laid her gently on a wide, luxurious bed.

"I want... to bathe," Kelly murmured, her mind still swimming from the drug's lingering effects.

His voice dropped low, sending a tremor through her. "We'll take one together."

She flushed. "Alex..."

"Not another word," he said, his voice soft but charged with a quiet authority. "For these three days, you belong to me, and I belong to you."

Her protests melted away the moment his lips found hers, a kiss so warm and tender it sent tremors through her very soul.

Suddenly, the rest of the world receded—her pain, her doubts, her fears all vanished in that single, electric moment.

She closed her eyes, her fingertips drifting over the broad lines of his shoulders.

This was the dream she had chased for so many sleepless nights, the reality she'd yearned for with every beat of her heart.

At last, it was here, and every second felt like a jewel she held close.

She remembered a truth she'd once heard: "Love is short, forgetting is long and painful."

In spite of it, her lips curved into a gentle smile an acceptance of the fragile joy she finally held in her hands.

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"Let us not speak of forever," she murmured, her words quiet yet brimming with emotion.

Let us not speak at all. Let us simply exist as though the universe were ours alone."

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"Why?"

*1 Just wondered because Kelly's been gone too," she said, her ton clipped.

An uneasy silence hung between them. Then she continued, "Anyway, Kelly just updated me about the Charles problem-my brother."

"And?" Alex prompted.

"I need to handle this on my own--no help from my father. It's a kingston family issue, and if I don't confront him directly, Charles will never respect me. Think of it as my final test before I can truly step into my role in Vancouver. Just promise you won't say anything to my father."

"Are you sure?" he asked, eyeing the empty shoreline where the helicopter had departed.

"I have to be. Besides, I know you're close to my father, but let him stay out of it. If I fail, I fail on my own terms."

Alex exhaled. "Fine. I won't tell him."

Jasmilte hesitated. "I may still need your help. Can I call if things get rough?"

"I'll help if I can," he said, though his thoughts wandered to the chaos that could erupt if the new king used Kingswell's resources to quash any opposition.

With the country already teetering, they couldn't risk a civil war.

His watch buzzed again-Sophia calling. He clenched his jaw, muttering, "No rest for the wicked."

"Where the hell have you been?" Sophia's voice snapped through the speaker.

"You vanish for three days, phone off, no explanation. Were you off with some woman?"

He stifled an exasperated groan.

'How is it that women always seem to activate their psychic senses at the worst moments?'

"What do you want?" he asked, his tone sharper than intended.

She paused, clearly still fuming. "It's my grandfather's birthday celebration today. Are you coming or not? We've been waiting. And do you even have money for a gift? If not, say the word-I'll send you some."

Alex glanced around his private villa, his gaze settling on an exquisite bottle of vintage wine-a costly token he'd once received from a grateful patient.

"I have something suitable," he replied.

"Don't show up with some cheap knockoff," Sophia bit out, then hung up without waiting for a response.

Before he could catch his breath, his watch lit up again: Lyra Thompson.

"Where have you been these past three days? You're not answering your phone." "What do you want?" he said, annoyance flaring.

"I'm out of miracle pills," Lyra explained calmly. "Do you have more? My clients are asking."

"Yeah, I can get some to you," Alex agreed. The need for money was growing urgent he had too many goals to reach, and fast.

There was a pause before Lyra asked, "Alex?"

"Yes?"

"Did you sleep with any girls in the last three days?"

Alex sighed deeply, muttering under his breath, "Not again..."

That evening, Alex made his way to the Emerald Villa-a sprawling estate hidden behind ivy-covered walls and manicured grounds.

He found Sophia at the entrance, tapping her foot impatiently.

"We need to talk," she said curtly.

He braced himself. "So talk."

She lowered her voice, refusing to meet his gaze. "I haven't told Granddad about our divorce. His health is fragile, and... I don't want him to know yet."

Alex studied her for a moment. "Alright. I'll keep it quiet."

"That's it," she muttered, casting Alex a look heavy with unspoken burdens.

She lingered there, torn between admitting her guilt over letting Megan smash the bucket of flowers and confronting him about her growing suspicion that his three- day disappearance might have involved another woman-a thought that only stoked her anger.

In the end, instinct trumped doubt.

Without another word, she spun on her heel in mounting frustration and disappeared inside.

'Human always hurt the ones they love the most, because they expect them to heal the wounds they never caused.'

Alex followed her, the unopened bottle of wine clutched in his hand like a peace offering he wasn't sure anyone wanted.

He looked at Sophia's back, once, they burned like twin flames.

Now, only embers remain, scattered by the wind.

The living room hummed with layered voices, and the scent of a catered feast mingled with an underlying tension unique to the Lancaster family.

Alex's eyes landed on a new face-Marco Ashford-seated in what should have been his chair beside Sophia.

Across the room, Florence Lancaster's scathing gaze locked on Alex.

"It's quite rude to keep your elders waiting," she snapped, each word dripping with disdain.

Her son, Jack, chipped in, brandishing a bandaged arm from their previous clash. "Careful, Mom," he drawled, feigning concern. "Wouldn't want him injuring you next."

A charged silence spread through the gathering, thick as fog, until Abraham Lancaster's booming voice cut through with a genial warmth.

"All right, now that everyone's finally here, let's eat." He beckoned Alex with a welcoming grin. "Come sit beside me, "Sure," Alex replied, managing a polite smile as he helped the old man to his seat.

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kid."

Across the table, Jack glowered, jealousy flaring in his narrowed eyes. "Kiss-ass,"

he muttered, baffled at his grandfather's fondness for someone outside the family bloodline.

Today's

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Jack hoisted a lavishly decorated wine box for all to see.

"Granddad, check this out. Marco just dropped by with a Domaine de la Romanée Conti Grand Cru. We ought to crack it open and celebrate!"

Abraham leaned forward, eyebrows raised.

"La Romanée-Conti? That's one of those outrageously pricey labels, isn't it?"

"You bet," Marco said with a self-satisfied grin.

"This baby's a 2005 vintage, and it set me back a cool hundred grand."

The room erupted with shocked gasps.

Even for the Lancaster clan, a \$100,000 bottle of wine was the stuff of fairy tales.

Florence eyed Marco with a mix of surprise and pride. "Good heavens, Marco. That's a bit excessive, don't you think?"

Yet beneath her admonishing tone, she practically glowed.

After all, Marco was now the suitor she had her heart set on for her daughter.

Marco waved off the concern with a dismissive chuckle.

"A hundred grand is nothing. I've got another whole barrel of this at home. It's my pleasure to share."

The family descended on him with flattery.

"Mr. Ashford, you're unbelievably generous!"

"What a wonderful treat for us!"

Marco's chest puffed up with each compliment, until Florence finally turned her gaze on Alex.

She wasn't about to miss an opportunity to take a jab and make him look bad.

"Hey, boy, why don't you learn a thing or two from Marco, huh? Look at the fine wine he's brought. I bet whatever you have came straight from the bargain bin. Don't be such a tightwad!"

She punctuated her mockery with a swift kick to Jack's shin.

Jack winced but forced a smile.

"Let's see what Alex brought," he said, voice dripping with anticipation.

With a flourish, he tore open Alex's wine box, revealing a old bottle.

"Tch, would you look at that?" Jack snorted.

"I thought he might bring something remotely decent, but no. These labels are practically prehistoric-and not in a good way. I'd wager these sad little craft brews aren't worth more than a couple hundred bucks."

Some distant cousin-one of the Lancasters-let out a sneering laugh.

"Craft brews? Those lost whatever value they once had. We wouldn't foist them off on our stable hands, let alone serve them to guests!"

"What a cheapskate!" Florence exclaimed, her lip curling in disdain.

"I hear these cheap wineries slap fake high-end labels on their bottles to fool people. Maybe Alex got duped into buying trash just so he could pretend to keep up."

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Alex calin as ever shrugged. "How do you know they're cheap or take when you've never even tasted them?" Jack rolled his eyes and scoffed, "You're not seriously comparing your penny ante

plonk to Marco's six-figure wine, are you?" "Sometimes price isn't everything," Alex answered. "And you have no chte what these bottles actually cost."

'Are you still yapping?" Jack said with a spiteful grin. "Face it: you re too broke to
"

pay attention, yet here you are, trying to save your sorry pride."

Florence leaned back, arms crossed. "He's nothing but a stubborn fool," she spat.

Alex just sighed. "No point explaining good wine to those who won't taste it with an open mind."

Abraham raised his hand for silence. "That's enough. What matters is how it tastes, not its price tag. I'd like to try this older bottle. Sincerity counts more than money."

He popped a cork and poured himself a glass of the pale, translucent liquid.

"Good grief!" someone muttered. "Why does it look lik

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watered down dishwater?"

"That's got to be fake," another voice chimed in their right mind brings counterfeit wine to a family dinner?"

Florence smacked the table with a loud crack. "Now're just insulting all of us!

Cheap wine is one thing, but fake wine? Do you plan to poison us while you're at it?"

The entire table erupted in angry chatter.

Even Abraham looked uneasy, swirling the glass and frowning at its lackluster color.

"It's normal for certain well-aged craft brews to lose color over time," Alex explained calmly. "The anthocyanins degrade with age, which lightens the pigment. That doesn't make it-'

"Utter bullshit!" Jack snarled, his lip curling in contempt.

"Do we look like complete idiots to you? In what world does a respectable vintage come out looking like watery piss?"

Florence jabbed a quivering finger at Alex. "Why spout such pathetic lies? this?"

Marco cleared his throat, putting on an air of saintly concern.

Do

you really think we're all stupid enough to fall for

"People, don't judge by appearances-sometimes a rich heart hides under a threadbare

He then paused, eyes flicking over Alex with thinly veiled derision!

"Though let's be honest: a big heart can't buy you a decent meal, let alone proper wine.'

He shook his head as though he were witnessing a tragic scene.

coat.

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"Alex, you poor, delusional soul. If you couldn't handle bringing a worthy bottle, why not just admit it? I could've loaned you something halfway respectable. But

no, you had to strut in here with this sorry excuse, trying to fool us for your own pitiful vanity."

His so-called sympathy was as phony as the fake label he was accusing Alex of fronting.

Inside, he felt giddy; making Alex look small in front of the Lancaster took hardly any effort at all.

Alex folded his arms. "Believe whatever you want. I'm telling you this wine is the real deal, and it's fantastic."

Jack broke into cruel laughter. "If you're that determined to keep lying, let me

bring in the big guns. I know a wine master who runs the best shop in Vancouver.

If he takes one sip of that swill and calls it fake, you'll do exactly what I tell you.

Deal?"

Alex raised an eyebrow. "Sure. Name your price."

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