

The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 151[1,160 words]

Chapter 151

Charles Kingston lounged in the grand lobby, swirling a glass of champagne between his fingers, when he caught sight of Jasmine slipping in through the front doors. She settled near the reporters.

Charles finished his drink, rose, and sauntered over.

"Where are your bodyguards?" he asked, feigning casual interest. Usually you travel with half an army."

Jasmine met his gaze with y calm.

"Should I bring them here just so they can kill your men? They're all Kingstons, every last one of them. Why waste resources on family?"

Charles's lips twitched in a bitter smile. "If you don't want a fight, you might as well hand over everything "

"Why would I give you control of the Kingston name?" Jasmine's tone grew razor- sharp.

"Especially when today's your last day in power? Word around town is you can't even afford to pay your own bodyguards anymore."

Her taunt landed like a slap.

Charles's jaw tightened. She was right-he was bleeding money from every angle, and it was all because of Jasmine's relentless sabotage.

"So," he hissed, leaning in closer.

"Rumor has it you're using black magic to keep yourself safe. That's how you're staying on top-sacrifices, rituals, the whole dark mess."

Jasmine's eyes narrowed. "Don't be ridiculous. I've never dabbled in that nonsense, and you know it."

Charles snorted. "Who knows what you've done behind closed doors? I heard you used dark sorcery to trick Father into giving you the Kingston empire."

"You're insane," Jasmine shot back, rising from her seat. "Your desire has turned you into a lunatic."

"You're the lunatic," Charles snapped, his voice trembling with rage.

"Demons, witches... I've got people coming who know how to handle your kind. You think you're the only black magic? My darkness will erase yours. By dawn, you'll be nothing but a memory."

who can wield

"Charles, are you crazy?" she warned, her voice echoing against the ornate pillars, "they've poisoned your mind with this superstitious filth. You're risking everything-"

But he was already gone, stalking away to set his plan in motion.

Jasmine sighed as Kingston gave Charles everything, yet he still felt it wasn't enough.

"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed."

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In a deserted parking lot, Tim and Tom with cold eyes and blood-splattered clothes-were cutting through Marco's hired gangsters like wolves through a herd of lambs.

Gunshots rang out in stuttering bursts, muzzle flashes lighting the asphalt.

Screams of dying men filled the air. Yet, these two monsters remained invulnerable to every attack, including gunfire.

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Bodies littered the ground, contorted in lifeless heaps. Blood painted the pavement in long, gruesome streaks. A thug lunged at Tim with a lead pipe, eyes wild.

Tim met him with a single, devastating punch to the sternum. The man's ribs cracked like dry wood. He choked on a scream, collapsed, and never drew another breath.

Tom swung a knife through another gangster's throat; the man gurgled in horror as his life spilled down his chest.

It was a symphony of terror, each kill feeding the twins' dark aura

With every life they snuffed out, they stood taller, exuding a strange, pulsing energy that crackled around them.

"W-what are these freaks?" a surviving gangster shouted, eyes bulging with terror. His voice was drowned by the wet snap of bone and the final wail of another comrade.

Nearby, Marco cowered behind a row of parked cars. Sweat poured down his face.

He regretted every decision that led him here.

He'd hired these men to take out Alex-supposedly an easy contract if he brought enough muscle.

But Tim and Tom were slaughtering his crew like they were nothing.

From where he crouched, he watched them tear through men he'd once considered the toughest in town.

Tim raised a blood-soaked hand and casually wiped his mouth. "What a bunch of trash," he spat, stepping over a corpse. "I'm not even warmed up."

Tom glanced at Marco's trembling form and sneered. "Pathetic."

Tim cracked his neck, wiping the blood off on his sleeve. "Now it's your turn, Alex,"

he hissed. "I hope you'll at least put up a fight."

Alex stood resolute, face set in grim determination. "Your black magic doesn't scare me," he said quietly, taking a step forward.

Tim's laughter echoed across the lot. "We've sacrificed enough souls to become unstoppable," he roared. "No one can stand against us!"

"Is that so?" Alex's voice was steady, like a blade drawn from its sheath. "I've seen your brand of evil before. It's as weak as a shadow in the midday sun." Tim snarled and lunged.

His eyes brimmed with lethal intent, his body coiling like a panther about to spring.

With an inhuman burst of speed, he barreled toward Alex-aiming a blow that could splinter bone and flatten any normal man.

But Alex moved faster.

He caught Tim by the throat in one fluid motion.

Tim's eyes bulged, his feet lifting inches off the ground. Power radiated from Alex, pressing down on Tim like the weight of an avalanche.

"The Light has come," Alex intoned, voice low. "All darkness...begone."

Tim convulsed, terror and agony twisting his features.

Whatever dark energy had infused him now leaked away as if Alex's grip siphoned it from his very core.

Tim's limbs went limp, his eyes rolled back, and with a ragged gasp, he crumpled to the pavement like a broken doll.

Then came Tom's roar from behind. He swung a wild haymaker at Alex's back.

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The impact never landed. Alex stood unyielding, an immovable force.

Energy burst from him in an invisible wave, and Tom was sent flying as though struck by a runaway horse.

He slammed into a concrete wall with a thunderous crash; bones cracked, and a tortured scream tore from his lips.

He collapsed onto the ground, gasping like a fish out of water.

When he glanced down, he saw the terrible truth: his arm, the one he'd used to strike Alex, was shattered beyond recognition, bent in a grotesque shape.

Worse still was the searing chaos he felt inside-his organs twisted in rebellion, as if something was rending him apart from

within.

Alex advanced with methodical calm. "Where light exists, darkness cannot thrive."

Tom's breath came in wet rasps.

Blood dribbled from the corner of his mouth. "You... you...who are you..." he choked out, eyes wide in abject horror.

Then his body seized, limbs stiffening in a final, agonizing spasm.

Marco watched in wide-eyed shock, disbelief knotting in his gut.

His men-ruthless thugs who'd once held dominion over the underworld-were strewn about the parking lot like discarded dolls.

Tim and Tom, those demonic twins he'd believed unbeatable, lay broken at Alex's feet.

"How...?" Marco croaked. His throat constricted in terror, each breath a struggle.

If Tim and Tom were the monsters, then Alex was something far worse-a being they had no hope of overpowering.

Alex leveled a stare at Marco so cold it chilled the air.

In that gaze, Marco saw the reflection of his own fear. He shuffled backward, legs shaking, mouth dry, searching for words that wouldn't come.

A moment stretched, heavy with possibilities-would Alex end him, too?

"A... monster..."

But Alex spared Marco nothing more than a glance of contempt.

, " he said softly, "while you still can."

"Run,"

Suddenly free of the spell of terror, Marco scrambled away, stumbling over the remains of his failed ambush.

"a monster?" Alex sighed.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that."

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Charles walked out of the hall when, suddenly, almost all his bodyguards' smartphones started ringing.

Some couldn't help but glance at their screens, curiosity tugging at them.

A few, after reading the message, exchanged looks, their eyes filled with confusion and silent questions.

Then, one of the braver guards finally spoke.

"Sir Charles, I don't mean to be impolite, but... I need to ask. Is it true that your money is gone? Like, gone gone."

"What do you mean, gone?" Charles frowned, his gaze sweeping over his men.

Yet, they all looked back at him, waiting for an answer.

"We just got a message," the guard continued hesitantly.

"All your bank accounts have been frozen under Jasmine Kingston's report to the financial authorities. They found stolen money in the accounts. You're practically broke."

A tense silence fell. The bodyguards exchanged uneasy glances.

Most of them were here for the money-what would happen now that their boss had nothing left to pay them?

Then, Jasmine stepped into as Alex following close behind.

Her expression was calm, almost amused. "He practically has nothing anymore," she said. "Even his cards have been blocked." Charles' fury ignited. His jaw clenched as he took a step toward her "How dare you -"

"Typical," Jasmine interrupted, unimpressed. "When you can't win, you resort to threats."

Alex moved forward, his eyes fixed on Charles. "Why don't you ask where your friend Bill and those black magic practitioners are? The ones you trusted to help you?"

Charles froze. He had sent them to kill Jasmine. But now, she stood here unharmed—and they were nowhere to be found.

His voice was hoarse when he finally spoke. "What happened to them?"

Alex's expression darkened. "If you try anything against Jasmine again, you'll meet them out soon enough."

Charles's frustration snapped. "Guards, seize these two! Now!"

But none of them budged. They exchanged uneasy glances instead. Finally, one guard just shook his head.

"I'm done," he declared, ripping off his earpiece and tossing it aside. "No money, no reason to stick around."

Others hesitated, then started drifting away too.

"What are you doing?" Charles sputtered, stunned. "Come on! I'll still pay you. It's just a temporary freeze... I have money, I swear!"

One of the guards turned back with a bored sneer. "Yeah? Show me"

Charles fumbled with his smartwatch, pulling up his bank apps.

He stared, horrified, at the frozen balances. His trembling fingers betrayed his panic.

The guard scoffed and walked off.

"Guys, wait!" Charles lurched after them. "Double pay, triple pay just don't leave!" They ignored him, striding away without a backward glance.

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"Cowards!" Charles roared, teeth bared, "You bastards you dare walk away from me?"

Thetist lashed out, catching one guard on the shoulder.

The guard simply blocked him, then slammed a punch into Charles's face.

Charles stumbled back, blood trickling from his lip.

"H How dare you hit me!" he wheezed, more shocked than hurt. These people were supposed to cater to him, protect him.

Then, one of his own drivers stepped up and drove a brutal kick into Charles's stomach.

Charles doubled over, gasping.

"How dare I?" the driver repeated, his voice dripping with disdain

"I only ever followed you because of your money. You never treated me-or any of us-like human beings. Now you can't pay, you're nothing"

He planted another kick in Charles's ribs. "So cough up my salary, you arrogant prick."

"I-I... just need-" Charles tried to speak, but words came out in useless stammers. Lack of money is the root of all evil.

A guard nearby snorted. "Fat chance he'll pay you. The guy's more broke than a stray dog."

He laughed and tore the gold ring right off Charles's finger.

"No! That's my mother's-" Charles started, but the driver cut him off with a hard punch to the jaw.

Charles reeled, and that was the cue for the others to join in.

Fists flew, shouts echoed, and Charles's expansive watches, necklace and wallet vanished into someone's pocket.

He tried to fight back, but it was useless.

The men he'd once lorded over were now taking turns paying him back for every insult and indignity.

Off to the side, Alex observed with a grim sort of acceptance. Jasmine's

expression was unreadable, her lips set in a thin line.

She turned to Alex.

"Let's go," she said quietly.

Alex nodded and held out his arm, guiding her away as Charles was left on the ground, cursing and howling in pain.

Outside, Jasmine spared one last glance over her shoulder.

"I wonder if he regrets everything now," she murmured, but there was no sympathy in her voice.

She slipped into her limousine, Alex right behind her.

"Are you hurt?" she asked, her tone unexpectedly gentle as her eyes roamed over

him.

"I'm fine," Alex said. "What's next on your list?"

Jasmine exhaled wearily. "There's a lot to set right. Now that Charles is out of the way, it's up to me to deal with the chaos he left behind."

Before Alex could respond, a voice called from across the parking lot.

"Alex!"

He turned to see Lyra Thompson hurrying over, her hair bouncing around her shoulders.

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"Lyra?" He raised an eyebrow, "What're you doing here?"

"Sophia's event, remember?" she replied, a bit breathless. "Anyway, I heard you're still hunting down rare herbs, right?"

"Yes," Alex said, brightening at the change of topic. "Got a lead?"

"Raymond Wellington," Lyra announced proudly.

"His family's been in pharmaceuticals for generations. The guy's practically hoarding rare herbs. I snagged an appointment- want to come?"

Jasmine watched her carefully from inside the limo, trying to place Lyra.

Daughter of Joe Thompson, she recalled, but also... potential rival for Alex's attention?

Alex gave Jasmine a small nod of apology. "I'll see you soon. Please take care of yourself."

Jasmine looked like she wanted to say something, but he'd already shut the car door and moved off with Lyra.

As Lyra drove them away, she kept her eyes on the road. "So, this Wellington guy's a fan of your pills-he wants to do business. Apparently, his family vault is stacked with all kinds of rare herbs.

"Let's hope he has what I need," Alex murmured, settling back in the seat. They rode in companionable silence until Lyra suddenly shot him a sly look.

"You know," she said, "I tried calling you a few days ago-radio silence for three straight days. Busy with something... or someone? A woman?"

Alex rolled his eyes. "Believe it or not, I have a life."

Lyra gave a knowing smirk. "Ah, so you weren't alone."

Alex rolled his eyes, refusing to answer.

How did the women around him always seem to know when he'd been with someone else?

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They made it to one of the biggest hotels in Vancouver in record time, with Lyra setting a brisk pace and offering no explanation.

She merely grabbed Alex by the hand and guided him up to the tenth floor lounge, where two men waited.

One was Lyra's father, Joe Thompson, looking healthier than the last time Alex had seen him.

The other was a man perhaps twenty years Alex's senior, built like an aging prizefighter with the kind of intense gaze that hinted he'd once been a force to be reckoned with.

His suit looked one size too small, struggling to contain his bulky frame.

One glance at his cold, unreadable expression told Alex this was not a man to be trifled with.

"Mr. Alex, I'm glad you could make it!" Joe said, standing up the moment Alex and Lyra stepped inside.

The old man's voice still carried warmth despite his recent brush with death. "How're you feeling, Mr. Thompson?" Alex asked.

"Can't complain," Joe replied with a grateful nod. "I owe it all to you. Frankly, I wouldn't be breathing if not for that pill you gave me."

"It was nothing," Alex said humbly. He still remembered Lyra telling him how desperately her father had needed the

miraculous cure.

Lyra grabbed Alex's arm, "Alex, there's someone I'd like you to meet."

She motioned to the muscular man.

"This is Raymond Wellington, a renowned medical expert out of Chicago. He's got plenty of experience in pharmaceuticals- and collects rare herbs from all over, including Vancouver."

Before Alex could respond, Raymond's eyes flicked over him with naked disdain.

"So this is the 'brilliant doctor' I've heard so much about?" he drawled.

"Kid doesn't even look old enough to drive, let alone practice medicine. This better not be a waste of my time."

Lyra bristled at his tone. "Mr. Wellington, you shouldn't judge people on sight. I've seen Alex's skill in action. He knows his stuff."

Raymond crossed his arms and let out a derisive snort. "Sure he does. If he's really as good as you say, then I don't mind letting him take a crack at me. Let's see if his so-called 'gift' can find anything wrong with a man who's as healthy as a horse."

"Actually, I don't need to examine you," Alex replied, calm as ever. "It's clear what's afflicting you at a glance."

Raymond's eyes narrowed. "What kind of bull is that? Even the top doctors in Chicago need a proper examination."

"That's their limitation," Alex said.

"But I can see you're very ill-poisoned, in fact. You've been ingesting it for at least

a year, most likely through your regular food or supplements. If you don't stop, you won't last more than a week."

The corners of Raymond's mouth twisted into a smirk. "Poison, huh? That's a neat little sales pitch. I bet you'll pull out some magical antidote next and try to bleed me for every dime you can. My body's too strong to be brought down by some imaginary

toxin."

Alex lifted a shoulder in a small shrug. "Physical strength won't save you from internal damage. Once the poison takes hold completely, there's no coming back."

"Pure nonsense!" Raymond barked, his voice echoing across the lounge. "I've been taking the same supplements, eating the

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same foods for decades. Nobody's ever tried to slip me anything. You're either delusional or a con artist-maybe both."

Joe cleared his throat, as if trying to defuse the tension. "Well, Mr Wellington, I believe distrust is the mother of safety. But you shouldn't dismiss Alex so quickly. He saved my life when no other doctor could."

Raymond rolled his eyes. "Joe, I'm sorry, but you've clearly been hoodwinked. My guess is this kid fed you some 'miracle' remedy that was nothing but a cheap tonic, and you just happened to recover on your own. Now, he's got everyone singing his praises while he lines his pockets."

Lyra's patience snapped.

"If you think he's a fraud, why don't we make a bet?" she challenged, stepping closer and crossing her arms. "You're so sure he's wrong-fine. Let's put something on the line."

Raymond raised an eyebrow, intrigued despite himself. "You want bet? Alright, I'm listening."

"Simple," Lyra said. "If Alex's diagnosis is correct and you really are at death's door because of poison, you let him pick anything he wants from your precious herb collection."

A thin smile tugged at Raymond's lips. "And if I'm still alive and kicking by this time next week?"

"Then you get the Thompson plantation's entire herb yield," Lyra replied evenly, her voice laced with challenge. "I know you've had your eyes on it for years. We're willing to part with it."

Raymond stared at her for a moment, then gave a low chuckle. "Well, aren't you bold. That's a mighty generous wager, Miss Thompson. What does your father think?"

Joe cleared his throat again, clearly reluctant. "My daughter runs the family business now. Whatever she says, goes."

Raymond's grin turned feral. "Then it's a deal. I always did want those Thompson herbs. Kid," he turned to Alex, "you'd better hope you're right. Because if you're not, you'll be handing over one valuable stash."

"Take it or leave it," Alex said with a slight shrug. "I'm only warning you so you have a chance to save yourself."

"Oh, I'll take it," Raymond sneered. "But if you think I'm gonna stay put in Vancouver just because you're playing the Good Samaritan, you've got another thing coming. I've got my own doctors back home. Even if I did get poisoned somehow, I don't need your help."

Alex's expression remained calm, but there was an unmistakable edge in his eyes.

"Suit yourself. But if you stay in town, I might still be able to save you-assuming you realize the truth before it's too late. This poison isn't the kind you can just shake off. It's slow-acting, untraceable, and, as far as I know, incurable."

"I highly doubt any doctor, no matter how skilled, could pull you back from the brink once it fully takes hold."

Raymond's upper lip curled in disgust. "Don't kid yourself. I'm not about to crawl to you for an antidote. I've dealt wit snake oil salesmen to know one when I see one."

Joe cast an anxious glance between them, but Alex simply rose from his chair. "I've got other matters to attend to. Mr. Thompson, please excuse me."

"Likewise, I'll be taking my leave," Lyra said, hot on Alex's heels,

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She paused at the door to give Raymond one last warning look. "You should take Alex's words to heart, Mr. Wellington. If you drop dead, that's on you." Raymond flapped a dismissive hand. "Save your breath, Miss Thompson. Worry more about your new 'doctor friend. You don't want him poisoning you next and selling you the 'cure'-though maybe that's already his plan."

Lyra's lips curled into a smirk, her voice laced with icy contempt.

"You think you're clever? There are only two ways to be deceived believing a lie or refusing to accept the truth. Guess which one you're doing."

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With that, she turned on her ligel, ending the conversation without another glance.

As Alex and Lyra walked away, Raymond's mocking laughter trailed after them, a grating sound that echoed through the hallway like a death knell.

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Charles Kingston snapped awake on a grimy park bench, every muscle in his body screaming.

Bruises covered him.

His pockets were empty-robbed clean.

His so-called bodyguard and driver had done this, beaten him senseless, dumped him here like trash, and taken everything.

Then, his smartwatch buzzed violently against his wrist—an incoming call.

They must have left his smartwatch because it was cracked—worthless to them.

It was still strapped to his wrist, a mocking reminder of the power he used to have.

"Mister Kingston." The voice from his smartwatch cut through his daze.

His lawyer.

"What... what happened?" Charles croaked, throat raw.

"I need to inform you, sir. The court has temporarily seized all your properties."

Charles froze. His heart thundered in his chest. Losing his properties could only mean one thing: he had lost everything.

"All... of them?" he whispered.

"Yes," the lawyer said bluntly. "And I must resign as your counsel. You still owe our firm nearly a hundred thousand dollars from your previous case—"

Charles ended the call before he could say more, blocking the number without hesitation.

Desperation clawed at him as he tried Marco next.

The phone rang endlessly, no answer. Fuming, he fired off a text.

"I need to borrow a million dollars."

The reply came back in seconds.

"What the hell? You already owe me forty million for Vermont National Life Group! Pay up or I'll kill you."

Charles's hands shook with rage.

No one had ever spoken to him like that.

"How dare you, you bastard!" he spat into the phone.

Marco's text landed like a punch.

"What don't I dare? You're nothing now-just a broke nobody. Still think you're the Prince of Kingston? You're a thief. I'll give you one week. If my money isn't back by then, you'll regret it."

Charles's entire body went cold.

Even his own bodyguards hadn't hesitated to beat him. He truly had lost everything he once was.

He stood there in the park, the wind rustling through the trees, the sun mocking him from a perfect blue sky.

"Where did I make the mistake?" he murmured, voice empty.

A sigh left his lips, heavy with regret.

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"If only I hadn't desired the head position..."

At one time, Charles had enough wealth to last a lifetime,

He could have lived comfortably, working as an executive in Kingston with a high salary, or even assisting his father in controlling Los Angeles.

He remembered his father's words: "Let Jasmine take care of Vancouver. When the time comes, Los Angeles will be yours."

But he hadn't believed him. He didn't want to wait. He wanted Vancouver.

His greed had consumed him, driving him past reason, past caution. Desire ruled him, and it led him straight to ruin.

Now, only regret remained.

A man could spend decades building an empire, but a single mistake could bring it all crashing down.

Despair is the price one pays for setting oneself an impossible aim

"What have I done..." Charles whispered, a hollow ache settling in his chest.

He had nowhere to go. No home. No power. No escape.

With a heavy sigh, he pushed himself up, his body aching, every movement laced with pain.

"Charles Kingston!"

A voice rang out, sharp and accusing.

Charles turned, squinting at the man approaching him.

"Do you remember Arianna?" the man asked.

Charles frowned. "Who?"

The man's lips curled into something bitter. "A woman you slept with for a week, then kicked out."

Charles scoffed, shaking his head. "Sorry, I've slept with a lot of women."

Women always flocked to him. Some became obsessed, some wanted marriage,

but to him, it had all been a game. His bodyguards used to handle them, removing any who clung too tightly.

The man stepped closer. "Yeah, I figured you wouldn't remember her."

Then, before Charles could react, the man's hand moved-fast.

Pain exploded in Charles's stomach.

A knife.

His breath hitched, his body tensing. Cold metal buried deep in his flesh.

Shock swallowed him whole.

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"She says hello." The man twisted the blade, a cruel smirk on his face. "And she wanted me to remind you-she swore she'd find a way to kill you if you broke her heart."

Charles couldn't believe it. Couldn't believe he was actually bleeding.

The pain was unbearable. His legs shook. His strength drained.

The man yanked the knife out, blood spilling over Charles's hands as he clutched his wound,

With a chuckle, the man added, "She promised to let me sleep with her for a week if I stabbed you. Easy peasy."

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With that, the man walked away, leaving Charles kneeling on the old ground.

Pan blurred his vision, his breath shallow. Memories played in his mind like a cruel film reel.

If only he hadn't craved power. If only he hadn't chased the head seat of Kingston. Maybe just maybe his life would have been different.

Meanwhile, at the Lancaster Building

Sophia Lancaster sat frozen, her face pale as death.

Just an hour ago, they had signed a contract with Charles Kingston Now, the

news had spread like wildfire-Charles had lost everything

Panic filled the room. The guests for the partnership had already left, leaving only the Lancaster family and their executives

behind

"What will happen to us?" Florence asked, her voice laced with fear. "If Charles Kingston has nothing, don't you think Jasmine Kingston, as his little sister, should take responsibility for this contract?"

One of the Lancaster executives shook his head. "No. The contract clearly states that our deal was made with Charles Kingston personally, not with the Kingston family." He hesitated before adding, "And... there's a possibility our company might be investigated too. Charles has been involved in illegal money dealings."

Florence slammed her fist on the table. "What kind of bullshit is this?! The Kingston family should be responsible for Charles's

mess!"

Another executive spoke, his face grim. "I heard businesses like Vermont National

Life Group are completely ruined. Their stock is worthless-might as well be tissue paper now. Because of Charles."

"What?!" Jack, Florence, and several family members gasped.

Their hands trembled-they had bought those stocks from Marco.

Someone quickly asked, "But if we bought the stock, can't we claim it from Vermont?"

The executive sighed, his expression even darker. "No. Vermont National Life Group just released a statement-they never expanded into Vancouver due to state law. They confirmed that anyone who bought Vermont National Life Group stock outside Vermont was 100% scammed."

A heavy silence fell over the room.

Then, chaos erupted.

"That bastard!" someone roared, slamming a chair.

"My money-my savings for ten years- gone!" Another voice cracked into sobs.

Sophia felt her stomach churn. Her face turned ghostly white.

She had put the Lancaster group's money into that deal.

And just like the old saying-when misfortune strikes, it never comes alone. It kicks down the door and storms in.

The room's tension snapped as soldiers suddenly barged into the Lancaster Building, their heavy boots echoing.

One of them stepped forward, his voice sharp and commanding.

"Who is Sophia Lancaster?"

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"Quick! Surround this place. No one leaves!"

A squad of heavily armed guards burst in, blocking every door and passage.

The lethal aura radiating from their weapons made everyone's blood run cold.

"Who is Sophia Lancaster? Don't make me repeat myself!" the leading soldier demanded, his gaze as sharp as a knife

Everyone froze in shock, watching the guards swarm inside. They exchanged confused glances.

"Officer, what is going on?" Florence asked, mustering her courage.

As an ordinary civilian, she had never experienced anything like this. Although she knew she had done nothing wrong, she still felt guilty.

"Are you Sophia Lancaster?"

"Me? No."

"I'm asking: who is Sophia Lancaster?" the officer repeated in a grim tone, eyes brimming with hostility.

"I am....." Sophia slowly stood up, trying to appear brave. "Officer, what can I do for you?"

Come with us immediately to assist in an investigation!" the officer ordered.

"W-what did I do wrong?"

"We suspect you're connected to the murder of Harlan-one of our key military assets."

"You think I killed Harlan?"

The accusation was shocking. Sophia did not seem capable of murder at all.

"Officer, you must be mistaken," Florence interjected. "My daughter is young and innocent! There's no way she's a killer"

"That's right! My sister is no murderer. Don't talk nonsense!" Jack slammed the table and stood up angrily.

"We'll determine the truth after the investigation," the guard replied coldly.

"Is that really necessary? We can all vouch for her!"

"That's right! Sophia is definitely not a killer!"

Several people chimed in, still relying on Sophia to handle the Lancaster family's business affairs.

"I'm only following orders," the officer said impatiently. "Anyone who tries to stop me will be treated as an accomplice!"

"You wouldn't dare!" Jack glared at him. "Do you know who we are? You're just a lowly soldier-if you lay a finger on my sister, you won't live to see the sunrise!"

"Really?" The leading soldier sneered. "Obstructing an arrest is a serious crime. Take them all away! Anyone who resists- shoot them!"

At his command, the soldiers raised their guns in unison, their cold barrels aimed squarely at the group.

The room went silent in an instant.

"You...you..." Jack trembled in fury. "I pay my taxes to feed dogs like you, and now you threaten me? I'm recording everything happening here!"

The leading soldier lost his patience.

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"Then record this." He lifted his gun and shot Jack in the thigh.

Jack screamed and collapsed, clutching his leg.

"Next time you speak, remember to respect the one holding the gun," the soldier growled.

Several women started crying hysterically. The soldier fired a warning shot into the air.

"Scream again, and I'll shoot every last one of you!"

Sophia quickly intervened, trying to calm everyone.

"Please, stay calm. This must be some misunderstanding. I'm sure they'll let me go once the investigation is complete."

The officer snorted. In their eyes, whether it was a "misunderstanding" or not was entirely up to them.

'The more power a man has over others, the more he is corrupted by it.'

One of the executives timidly raised his hand. "W-we're not even related to the Lancaster family... There's no need to bring us along right?"

Others hurriedly agreed.

The soldier snapped, "Then which of you are the Lancasters?"

The same executive immediately pointed out every member of the Lancaster family, selling them cheap.

In the blink of an eye, what should have been a good day for the Lancasters turned into a nightmare.

"Take them away!" the officer barked.

The guards shoved everyone outside and into waiting vehicles. Jack, bleeding from his thigh, was dragged along. Though the wound was shallow, it burned fiercely.

All of them were crammed into a military truck and driven to a hidden Drake family mansion twenty minutes away.

"Officer, please help my son-he's bleeding," Florence pleaded, as Jack continued to wail in pain.

The leading soldier aimed his gun at Jack's head. "I've got some 'medicine' that'll stop his whining. You want it?"

Florence and Jack blanched and fell silent.

"Quit talking! Move!" the soldier snapped, forcing everyone inside the mansion.

In the middle of the living room stood a coffin adorned with Harlan's portrait; Jasper sat beside it in silence.

"Sir Drake?" Several people recognized him and stared in confusion,

Sophia's heart sank-she realized they had walked right into a trap.

"Is everyone here?" a deep voice called out.

Moments later, a burly man named Jarvis emerged, exuding a menacing aura. His sharp gaze and towering presence were suffocating.

Soon after, another soldier dragged Marco inside.

Marco's face was battered and bloody.

"We caught this one trying to run, so we taught him a little lesson the soldier said with a sneer.

The Lancaster family glowered at Marco, remembering how he had been siphoning their funds.

"Sir, everyone involved is here," the officer reported.

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"Good." Jarvis nodded and scanned the crowd

My name is Jarvis Drake. I'm a lieutenant in the military. I'm sure some of you

have heard of me. It appears you're all ponnected to the death of one of our military assets."

"Jarvis Drake? A lieutenant?"

Everyone's faces fell at his words.

He spoke as if everyone should already know his name, yet they were just ordinary citizens who rarely paid attention to the military-or to anything outside of the occasional rise in electricity bills.

They were hardly involved in politics.

Even if they hadn't heard his name before, they understood that someone in the military had the power to convict anyone with a single word.

The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must

"I won't waste time," Jarvis continued. "I have just one question. Answer honestly, and you might walk out alive. Lie to me, and you'll be charged with murder." "Lieutenant, we'll cooperate fully!" Florence shouted desperately. But please, help my son his leg-"

Jarvis gestured to a nearby soldier, who approached Florence but suddenly struck her across the face.

"How dare you speak out of turn to the Lieutenant! Are you trying to get yourself killed?" the soldier roared.

"What are you doing?" Jarvis scolded the soldier. "I told you to treat the boy's leg."

"Yes, Lieutenant."

The soldier then approached Jack with two others. They restrained him while one drew a short knife, along with a needle and

thread.

"W-what are you doing?" Jack cried in alarm.

"We're treating your wound, just like your mother asked," the soldier replied coldly.

"No, no!" Jack screamed as they began to stitch up his wound without any anesthetic.

Florence looked on in horror but was forced into silence by another soldier who wordlessly threatened her if she dared speak.

Jack's screams filled the room.

Jarvis allowed the cries to echo, hoping to terrify the others into submission-he wanted them all to know there would be dire consequences if they opposed him.

The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 156[1,297 words]

Chapter 156

"Don't any of you fret," Jarvis murmured, his voice as steady as a loaded gun. "I'm not about to rip your nails off just for fun."

He spoke so casually that it sent a chill straight through the crowd. One look at him, and they knew he was perfectly capable of following through.

Everyone shrank back, fear gnawing at their insides. This man had the kind of presence that made people obey without question.

"Alright then," Jarvis went on, folding his arms across his chest. Let's get straight to it: Were any of you involved in my brother's death?"

A wave of panic rippled through the group, like a stampede of anxious cattle.

"Us? We had nothing to do with it!"

"It's true! We're innocent!"

"Lieutenant, you've got this all wrong! None of us killed Sir Drake!

Their frantic denials filled the air, each person terrified that a single misstep would seal their fate.

"That so?" Jarvis let out a harsh, humorless laugh.

"Jasper!" He jerked his chin, beckoning the limping man forward. "Take a good look at these folks."

"I'm here," Jasper snarled as he hobbled across the room.

His eyes skimmed over the crowd and landed on Sophia.

A flicker of lust turned to dark resentment in the same heartbeat.

With his injury, he was no longer able to indulge his desires-even for such a captivating woman.

"Uncle, it's her-Sophia!" he spat.

"She's tied up in my father's death. She was with her, and then-bang!-he's dead. But she is safe. Looks mighty suspicious, don't it?"

He flung his arm toward Marco, eyes blazing with accusation.

"And him! He's always circling her like a damn guard dog, ready to jump to her defense. If she's involved, then so is he! No way he's sitting this one out!"

Marco stood there, jaw slack.

He couldn't believe Jasper was dragging him into this nightmare.

"You got anything to confess?" Jasper demanded, fixing Marco with a piercing glare. "Tell me right now: Did you kill my old man?"

"No! No, it wasn't me!" Marco pleaded, his voice cracking in terror. Beads of sweat formed on his brow. "I don't know anything about it! Please-you've got it all wrong!"

"Don't know, or don't want to say?" Jasper's tone sharpened like a blade.

"Mr. Drake, I swear, I had nothing to do with your father's death!"

"Then I guess you need a little convincing." Jasper shrugged, a sadistic grin tugging at his lips. "Boys-teach him to talk."

Two soldiers lunged forward, iron batons at the ready.

"Wait-damn you!" Jack suddenly roared, wincing through the pain in his injured leg. Despite the agony, his temper flared like a brushfire.

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"Do you have any clue who you're messing with? That man there Marco Ashford! He's tight with Kingston. You lay a hand on him, and Kingston's men will come down on you harder than a hammer on a nail!"

Jasper's eyes sparked in delight. "Hear that, Uncle Jarvis? This clown's got ties to Kingston. That means he had every reason to go after Dad!"

"You telling me you're Kingston's accomplice, the one who put my brother in the ground?" Jarvis demanded, turning his glare

onto Marco.

"No! God, no!" Marco insisted, desperation pouring from every word. "I've got nothing to do with Kingston. This is all one giant misunderstanding!"

Jack shot Marco a nasty grin. "Why are you shaking in your boots, hen? Kingston's on your side, aren't they? These folks won't dare lay a finger on you."

"Shut your mouth!" Marco snarled, delivering a fist to Jack's face.

He was practically shaking with fear. 'Kingston's finished-Charles Kingston lost his power ages ago. Meanwhile, Jarvis is a lieutenant with an entire army under him.

Who on God's green earth can stand up to that?'

"Marco!" Florence shouted, rushing to her son's side. "How could you strike my boy? You called on Kingston the last time Drake went after Sophia, didn't you? Can't you do it again now, save us all?"

"For the love of-woman, keep your trap shut!" Marco was on the brink of losing it, sweat rolling down his temples. "These idiots. Don't they see how dangerous Jarvis is?"

"Save your breath," Jasper broke in coldly. "We've got evidence. Now, how are you gonna worm your way out of this one?"

Marco knew his time was up.

When the water's rising to your neck, you don't waste breath complaining-you start swimming.

Without hesitation, he flipped sides in an instant.

"Evidence?" Marco spat, panic staining his voice. "This is all nonsense! Sophia only ended up at my place by chance that day. They gave me credit for helping her, but I never lifted a finger!"

Jack's eyes narrowed. "So you didn't help my sister at all?"

"Help her?" Marco snapped. "Use your damn head! You think I'd ask Kingston to rescue your sister? I was the one who handed her address over to Harlan so Drake could capture her. I've always been on Drake's side!"

Silence fell over the Lancaster family like a tombstone. They stared at Marco, horror etched into their expressions.

"You... you sold Sophia out to Drake?" stammered one of the Lancasters. Marco turned sharply back to Jasper.

"Go ahead and check with your men. They'll tell you I was the one who handed Sophia's address over, and I've got no ties to Kingston. That bastard cheated me with worthless stock, leaving me broke!"

A cry rang out from one of the Lancasters who had put money into that same company. "So Vermont Life is useless? It's all worthless?"

Marco let out a humorless bark of laughter. "Sure is. Alex was right all along- Vermont National Life is nothing but an empty shell!"

Florence looked like she'd been punched in the gut. "But... you said we could exchange it at Vermont. How does a big company just go empty like that?"

"I lied!" Marco snapped. "All of it was lies. If you want to blame someone for losing your money, blame Charles Kingston-he's

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the one who took it all!" He glanced at the family with scorn.

"I'm cutting myself loose from you fools, and I'll do whatever it takes to survive."

Florence gaped, her voice trembling with shock. "You've been deceiving us this entire time? Scamming us?"

"Damn straight!" Marco sneered. "I needed some quick cash, and you were stupid enough to swallow every tall tale I spun."

"Monster!" Florence shrieked, lunging at him like a mother wolf protecting her cubs. "You stole our life savings! I want it

back!"

Shouts and curses exploded from the furious Lancasters, but guards shoved them aside.

Only Florence managed to rake her nails across Marco's face.

"It's gone!" Marco roared. "I wired the money overseas, so you can kiss it

goodbye! You trusted me. That was your mistake."

Sophia, who had been quiet until then, finally found her voice.

"Why on earth would you do something like this?" she asked in disbelief. She recalled the warnings they might be scammed, and how no one had believed it. Now the grim truth stared back at her.

"Why?" Marco let out a twisted chuckle. "Simple: money. With money, I can have anything-women, power, you name it."

Sophia pressed on. "So the partnership with Kingston at first was never your doing either?"

"Exactly." Marco smirked, rolling his shoulders. "Charles never even spoke to Kingston about working with you. It just fell into place on its own, and I went along for the ride. And you fools? You practically worshipped me for it."

Her expression darkened. "And what about the partnership with Charles?" "That," Marco sneered, eyes glinting with mockery, "is all thanks to your dear mother. Couldn't keep her damn mouth shut, shoved Jasmine aside, and handed me the perfect opportunity. Now, thanks to her, Charles owns half your Lancaster properties And if he needs cash? Guess who's footing the bill? You lot signed your own shackles—might as well start calling him master."

All color drained from Sophia's face. She had never imagined that the man she once believed had helped her had instead betrayed her at every turn.

If Marco wasn't the one pulling the strings to save her, then who was?

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The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 157[1,247 words]

Chapter 157

Chapter 157

Sophia's mind drifted back to the dream with Alex that had felt so vivid.

Could it really have been Alex—the same man who used to protect her, even after everything that happened between them?

Part of her wanted to believe it, but she quickly dismissed the idea

They were divorced.

Why would he lift a finger for her? Besides, Alex wasn't the sort to get involved in such dangerous affairs.

It was impossible... wasn't it?

Suddenly, Jack's furious voice broke through her thoughts, reverberating in the living room. "Marco Ashford! You slimy piece of dirt! I must've been out of my mind to trust you!"

Marco only laughed, a cold, mocking sound that sent shivers down Sophia's spine.

"You're all blind," he sneer

1. ed. "The whole lot of you. And don't act like you just realized it. I did you a favor by ripping off the blindfold."

"Favor?" Florence spat, her voice trembling with rage. "I considered you family! You're worse than Alex ever was!"

Marco rolled his eyes, a contemptuous grin stretching across his face.

"So what? Your opinion doesn't matter to me-not now that I've gotten what I need from your bank accounts." Before either Jack or Florence could fling more accusations, Jasper's voice boomed over everyone else's, raw with anger. "Shut up! All of you! I'm sick of your whining."

His shout cut like a knife. Immediately, silence draped over the room. Marco, losing his earlier bravado, dropped to his knees with a resounding thud.

"Please," he pleaded. "I have nothing to do with the Lancasters! I don't even know Carlos! The Lancasters were behind Sir Drake's death. It's not on me!"

Jasper turned to a tall figure near him-Jarvis, whose mere presence seemed to squeeze the air from the room. "Uncle Jarvis, what do we do with this piece of trash?"

Jarvis stepped forward, his voice low and steely.

"I don't care about your dealings with the Lancasters. I only need the name of Sir Drake's murderer. Tell the truth, and I'll show you mercy. Lie, and you'll get a bullet in the head just like the rest

Desperation painted itself across Marco's face. His mind raced-he needed someone else to blame.

"I'll talk. I swear! I've figured it out. It must be Alex! He's the one who killed Mr. Drake!"

"Alex..." Jasper murmured, stroking his chin. Recognition flickered in his eyes. "That name sounds familiar."

Marco, sensing a lifeline, began rambling. "Yes, Jasper. You remember him. He's the one who beat you and Hank to a pulp a while back. He must've come to

rescue Sophia. He still cares about her-probably more than his own life."

2

Jasper's gaze hardened. "It's him," he growled. "Uncle Jarvis, Alex is the prime suspect. We need to find him."

Jarvis's features went cold. "And where is he, exactly?"

Marco smirked, sensing an opportunity to shift the focus away from himself.

"Saw him at the Lancaster building this morning, but who knows where he is now?"

Trust me, though-just make Sophia call him. He'll rush right over to play the hero." He jabbed a finger in Sophia's direction,

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Chapter 157

"Yeah!" Jack chimed in hastily. "We're innocent. If anyone's guilty, it's him!" "That's right!" Others added, their voices a chorus of fear and desperation.

Jarvis's eyes swept across the room, silencing the panicked cries with a single glance. "I'll decide who's innocent once I have proof. Until then, everyone is a suspect."

A collective groan rose from the Lancasters. Someone muttered angrily, "That damn Alex is going to get us all killed..."

"This isn't fair! We've done nothing!" another wailed.

"Sir Jarvis!" Florence shouted. "If you want Alex, I can call him. Tell him you've got Sophia, and he'll come running. He's obsessed with her. I've seen it in his eyes."

Jarvis gave a curt nod. "Then call him."

Without warning, Florence grabbed Sophia's smartwatch.

"Mom!" Sophia gasped, trying in vain to snatch it back. "What are you doing?"

"I'm not about to die because of that man!" Florence hissed through clenched teeth.

Sophia's heart pounded against her ribs: "But-what if he's the one who saved me? Selling him out could be a mistake!"

Florence fixed her daughter with a fierce glare. "So you'd rather watch your family die instead? You'd choose that murderer over your own blood?"

Sophia opened her mouth, but no words emerged.

The silence that followed was suffocating.

Finally, Florence punched in the number and pressed the watch to her ear. "Alex!" she barked when he answered.

"You'd better come here. I'm sending you the GPS position. Don't act like you

didn't kill Harlan. Now a lieutenant's got all of us trapped!"

On the other end, there was only quiet. Alex didn't bother to speak, as if Florence's predicament meant nothing to him.

She shouted, desperation breaking through every syllable, "Damn it, Alex-Sophia is here, too! She will die if you are not coming!"

There was a single beat of silence. Then his voice came, cold and cutting. "I'm on my way."

The call went dead.

Florence exhaled a shaky breath and turned to Jarvis. "He'll show. I'm sure of it."

Jarvis hardly seemed impressed. "He'd better. Otherwise, I'll kill every last one of you."

Florence gave a bitter smile, false confidence in her eyes. "He's gone head over heels for my daughter. He'll come no what."

er

Unfazed, Jarvis rubbed his temple. "Take them all to a single room and keep them under guard. They have one hour. And bring Marco to my study."

"Yes, sir." One of the soldiers snapped a salute before marching Florence and the others away, locking them up like prisoners.

Marco was dragged elsewhere, protesting every step.

Jasper suddenly moved closer to his uncle.

"Uncle," he began, voice hushed but filled with anger. "I need to even the score.

Let me have one of them."

Jarvis's gaze flicked to Sophia.

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Even in this chaos, she stood out-her beauty and poise were hard to ignore.

He raised an eyebrow at Jasper. "That woman?"

Jasper's lips curled into a dark smirk. "Yes."

Jarvis glanced at his nephew's already broken manhood, damaged state.

What could he possibly do to a woman with condition like that?

Still, perhaps he could use Jasper.

Let him threaten Sophia, break her spirit, and then Jarvis himself could swoop in- appear as the good person, earning her trust

'A man will go to war, risk his life, and conquer kingdoms, all for the smile of a beautiful woman.'

He nodded.

"Fine, you can have her."

Jasper turned happy said, "soldier please bring that woman to my room."

Two soldiers seized Sophia. She yanked her arms back, struggling, fear blazing in her eyes.

Meanwhile, Marco found himself in Jarvis's study, knees practically knocking together. A guard stood beside him, stone-faced

Jarvis entered, taking a seat behind a heavy wooden desk.

He slid a piece of paper across the surface with a number written in bold ink.

"All your money," he said coolly. "Every cent you stole from the Lancaster family included. Transfer it here within twenty minutes."

Marco swallowed. "But, Sir Jarvis, can't we-"

"Shut your mouth." Jarvis didn't even glance up. Instead, he addressed the

soldier. "Take him to another room. If that money isn't in my account in twenty minutes, pull the trigger."

"Yes, sir." The soldier grabbed Marco and hauled him out, the door slamming shut behind them.

Left alone, Jarvis leaned back in the chair, massaging the bridge of his nose.

This was all one monumental headache-he only needed to root out Drake's killer and be done with it.

Then he could get back to his post and his life.

"Lieutenant Jarvis, tell me something... do you always get off on abusing your

power?"

Jarvis jerked upright by the voice.

Standing before him was a young man-calm, composed, and unannounced, as if

he'd materialized out of thin air. muscles taut, mind racing.

He'd never heard the door open.

It was as if the devil himself had just walked in.

"Are you looking for me?"

stared,

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The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 158[920 words]

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Sobate stumbled into the room, flanked by a wary soldier. Jasper's cold eyes flicked to her.

"Hey, you," he snapped at the soldier, "Tie her to the chair."

The soldier froze, clearly conflicted.

Jasper's voice sliced through the silence, "Do it or I'll let my uncle deal with you."

Pinned by fear, the soldier nodded.

He took a length of rope and secured Sophia's wrists and ankles to the chair. Her complexion turned ghostly white.

Her voice shook as she pleaded, "Please don't do this."

Jasper waved a dismissive hand at the soldier. "You, get out."

The door shut behind them, leaving Sophia alone with him.

He inched closer, gaze dark with unbridled hunger.

"You cost me my manhood," he growled. "Now I'll make you suffer."

Sophia's eyes widened, her chest tight with terror. "Please, Mister Jasper, don't-"

"Shut up!" he snarled, striking her across the cheek.

She gasped by the pain, head snapping to the side.

Jasper's fingers clamped around her jaw, forcing her to face him. "Don't test me," he warned, voice dripping with menace.

He released her, stalking toward a small wooden chest near the wall.

Its hinges creaked as he lifted the lid, revealing an array of sex toys designed for many purposes.

He grabbed a scissor and returned, pressing the cold metal against the fabric of her pants.

Sophia trembled, tears stinging her eyes. "Please-please don't," she pleaded.

Jasper's hand snapped out again, delivering another hard slap. "How many times do I have to say it? Be quiet."

Sophia's fear and pain ignited into a flash of anger.

She glared at him through tear-blurred vision.

"When Alex finds out," she hissed, "he won't just break you. He'll kill you."

Jasper smirked, unflinching. "Let him try. My uncle will gut him before he even steps foot here."

He lifted the scissors again. "Now behave, so maybe I won't have to cut too deep."

The Study

Jarvis eyed the young man standing across from him, every nerve an edge. "Who are you?"

Alex stepped forward, his presence an almost physical weight pressing down on the room. "A man like you doesn't need my name," he said quietly.

A chill crawled up Jarvis's spine.

He'd been in wars, killed without pause, but Alex exuded a darkness that made every instinct scream danger.

"All you need to know," Alex continued, settling into a chair and propping his boots on the desk, "is that I killed Harlan. He

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touched my woman. I don't let that slide,"

Taric tried to swallow his growing dread. "Do you know who I am??

Alex's gaze was razor-sharp, his voice edged with quiet menace, know exactly who you are, Lieutenant Jarvis Drake. You've earned just enough merit to make me hesitate-otherwise, you'd already be dead. Consider that a gift."

Before Jarvis could muster a response, his phone buzzed, slicing through the tension.

Alex barely spared it a glance. "You might want to answer that."

Jarvis glanced at the caller and immediately stiffened.

"General," he blurted, rising to his feet as though the man could see him.

A firm voice crackled through the line. "Lieutenant, I hear you left your post for Vancouver."

"Yes, sir. It was personal."

"I don't care. Drop whatever you're doing and return. That's an order."

Alarm tightened Jarvis's chest. How the hell does he know?

The general's tone turned grave. "Listen to me carefully. You're a good soldier. If you weren't, I wouldn't bother calling. The man you're hunting... outranks even me. Cross him, and you, your family-everyone-will be dead within an hour."

Jarvis felt the blood drain from his face. "Are... are you serious, sir??

"I don't joke," the general snapped. "If you've already stirred trouble, fix it. Now. Because if he decides to retaliate, I won't be able to protect you." The line went dead.

Silence pressed in like a storm cloud.

Jarvis turned to Alex, a million thoughts colliding in his mind. But no words came out.

Alex rose with a lethal calm.

"I killed Harlan because he touched what's mine. If anything happens to her..."

His eyes flashed murder. "I'll bury the entire Drake family."

Jarvis's heart pounded.

He knew, in that moment, he'd made a disastrous mistake.

"I'll stop everything," he promised, voice quivering. "Please... wait here."

He bolted out of the study, mind racing, lungs seizing. God, please let Jasper have kept his hands off that woman.

Back at Jasper's Suite

Jarvis found the soldier who'd escorted Sophia. "Where are they?" he demanded.

"Inside," the soldier said, voice trembling. "He-he tied her up."

Jarvis felt cold sweat break across his forehead. If Sophia was harmed, the Drake family was doomed.

He reached the door-it was locked. He didn't hesitate.

One powerful kick and the doorframe exploded, wood shards raining onto the floor.

Sophia sat bound to a chair, pants sliced open.

Tears streaked her cheeks. Jasper stood naked except for bandages covering his lower body, sex toys in hand.

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He turned, surprise flashing Across his textures.

"Unele," Jasper sneered, "ever heard of knocking?"

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jaw clenched, Jarvis advanced, ignoring the stench of fear and sweat. "Last time

you tried to touch her, you ended up in the hospital. Then your father tried, and he ended up in the morgue."

Jasper eyed him warily. "So?"

"And now," Jarvis said, lifting his gun and pressing it between Jasper's eyes, "you want the entire Drake family to die for your stupidity again?"

"What

Bang

Bang

Bang

Jasper's body jerked with each shot before it hit the floor, blood pooling beneath him.

Sophia screamed, eyes squeezed shut against the horror.

Gunpowder fumes stung the air.

Jarvis hurried to untie her. "Miss Lancaster," he said, voice taut with guilt. "I was deceived. I made a terrible mistake."

Sophia stared in shock, her ears ringing, her entire body shaking

He swallowed hard. "I'm sorry. Truly,"

Her vision blurred with tears, mind reeling. 1

An apology-from the man who'd just executed his own nephew. It was almost too surreal to process.

The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 159[1,134 words]

Chapter 159.

Chapter 159

Sophia kept her gaze fixed on Jarvis, the man who'd just taken them captive.

He practically radiated arrogance-enough to set entire villages ablaze.

Yet here he stood, trying to appear as harmless as a kitten.

"Miss Lancaster, I'm going to cut the rope," he said softly, as though afraid to startle her.

With a swift motion, he drew a military knife and sliced through the restraint. He paused a moment, then turned his face aside before speaking again.

"Please find a pair of jeans in that wardrobe. I'll let you and your family go. This was all a mistake."

A mistake? Sophia didn't believe a word of it.

Tigers didn't just stop being predators overnight.

Still, she wasted no time hurrying to the wardrobe.

She dug out a pair of jeans she could find and slipped them on, all while watching Jarvis out of the corner of her eye.

Surprisingly, he didn't move a muscle.

He stepped to the doorway and called out, "Soldier! Take Miss Lancaster to her family and escort them home."

"Yes, sir," the young officer replied, confusion flickering across his face. They had barely been here an hour-why set them free so soon?

"Please follow me, miss," he said.

She followed him hesitantly, her confusion mounting. Before she left, she turned one last time to Jarvis.

"Did you meet Alex?" she asked.

Jarvis thought of that man sitting so calmly at the table earlier.

He chose silence over any explanation. Sometimes, silence was the best answer.

Seeing he wouldn't speak, Sophia followed the soldier out.

Minutes later, the entire Lancaster family was driven away from the mansion.

Jarvis retreated to his study, but when he opened the door, he found it empty.

A sudden tremor shook his hands. Sinking onto the couch, he poured himself a glass of whiskey and downed it in a single burning gulp.

Then he grabbed his smartwatch and placed a call.

A deep, resonant voice answered on the other end. "Have you found Harlan's killer?"

"Yes Patriarch," Jarvis replied, trying to steady his hands.

"Have you killed him?" came the next question.

Jarvis let out a short, bitter laugh

"Kill him? My own generals tremble at the thought. He warned me that if we keep pushing, the entire Drake family could be wiped off the map in an hour. Are you willing to take that risk?"

Heavy silence settled on the line.

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"How did Harlan end up in trouble with him?" the voice finally asked.

"Harlan and his son touched the wrong woman," Jarvis answered taking another slow sip of whiskey.

'No man chooses evil because it is evil; he only mistakes it for happiness.'

"It was the biggest mistake of their lives. I nearly crossed that line myself. My military standing is the only thing that saved me

this time, anyway. If we ever challenge him again, we're finished"

Another pause, longer this time. "What do we tell Jericho Cane?"

"I have no idea," Jarvis admitted, pressing his free hand to his temple.

"I'm heading back to my post. My final advice? Steer clear of Jericho's business. If

he dares to provoke that man, we'll go down right along with him."

A frustrated sigh came through the speaker.

Then Jarvis remembered something.

"There's a man named Marco-I forced him to wire his money into the family account. Combine that with whatever's left of Harlan's assets. It should be enough

to sever ties with Jericho."

Not long after, Jasmine and the rest of the Lancaster family arrived at the Lancaster Building, shaken as though returning from a funeral.

Megan ran forward the moment they stepped inside.

"Thank God you're all safe!" she cried.

"Safe?" Florence shouted, her voice tight with outrage. "We were nearly killed! And that crook, Marco—he stole our money! I swear, if I ever see him again—"

"Miss Lancaster," Megan interrupted, her tone urgent, "you need to hear this." "What is it?" Sophia asked, bracing herself.

"The police have ordered all our business activities to be frozen."

"What?" Sophia's eyes widened.

"They're investigating whether Charles Kingston funneled any illicit funds through our company," Megan explained. "Since you two signed a partnership contract, they're digging into everything."

"But we never accepted any money from Charles! That contract was brand new!" Sophia protested.

"Yes!" Florence snapped. "This is absurd! Where is Charles? I want to talk to him!"

Megan hesitated, then spoke in a hushed tone, "Someone stabbed Charles. We don't know if he's alive. The paramedics rushed him to the hospital, but he lost a lot of blood."

Panic gripped the entire family. Megan pulled a file from her bag.

"This is the federal notice," she said grimly. "We have to suspend operations until they complete their investigation."

Sophia skimmed the paper, then sank into a chair, her hands trembling.

"Miss Lancaster," Megan ventured, her voice soft, "do you think you could ask Alex to speak with Jasmine Kingston? She might be our only chance." "Alex..." Sophia murmured.

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"Sophia, that man has always liked you," Florence chimed in, desperation edging her voice. "He'd help you out, considering his confections to Jasmine. It's out only option."

Nods and murmurs spread through the worried family members.

They relied on company dividends; if the business collapsed, their finances would be next.

"Yes, yes," they chorused. "Jasmine clearly likes that man, and he can talk to her for us. Please, Sophia—"

Sophia suddenly whirled around, her frustration boiling over.

"You!" She pointed straight at Megan. "You took his bouquet andrew it on the ground! How can you possibly expect him to help us now?"

Then she rounded on her mother, voice shaking with suppressed anger.

"Mom, I warned you not to provoke Alex or Jasmine! But you went anyway- dragging Jack along and ruining any hope of a deal with Jasmine! We got roped into Charles's mess. If you'd just listened..."

A heavy silence fell. Nobody dared meet her gaze.

"Think Jasmine will sign a contract with us now?" Sophia demanded. "Alex told us Marco was scamming us, but none of you listened. Instead, you forced me to hand over the company's funds to him-and look where we are."

The family stared at the floor, remorseful but unwilling to speak.

"You're all just dumping the blame on me!" Sophia burst out.

"I'm done carrying this on my shoulders. If you want this company to crash, then watch it burn, for all I care. None of you is actually willing to fix this mess!" Florence set her jaw. "Why are you so upset? We're only asking you to call Alex! The man practically worships you-he'll do it! Jasmine will come back to the table, fix our troubles with Charles, everything!"

"Yes, Sister," Jack pleaded, wringing his hands. "I heard from the soldiers that Marco's already on the run. If Alex helps us, maybe Jasmine can track him down. We can get our money back, too!"

Their voices rose in a cacophony of desperation.

Sophia pressed a hand to her aching forehead.

She couldn't believe the audacity around her. Did they have no shame?

Or had their greed blinded them completely?

'Yet some people will burn the whole house down just to prove they weren't the ones who left the stove on.'

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The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 160[1,278 words]

Chapter 160

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Aleostood atop the Harlan mansion, surveying the pandemonium below.

Down on the street, he spotted Marco racing along as if a rabid dog were nipping at his heels.

But that wasn't Alex's concern.

Yes, Marco had scammed the Lancasters, but Alex had warned everyone. They'd chosen not to listen. They'd let it happen.

His time was better spent on his own pursuits: finding more money, securing more elixir, leveling up.

There was a battle on the horizon, and his parents' enemy wouldn't wait forever. Careful progress was the only way forward.

A sudden buzz from his phone cut through his thoughts.

"Alex?" came the familiar voice of Ruth, the matron of the orphanage.

"Hey, Ruth. Everything okay?" he asked.

"Are you in Vancouver?"

"Yes. Need something?"

Ruth sighed audibly. "Josephine's in Vancouver on business, and now she's lost. Her phone battery died, and she can't find her way back. Could you help her?"

"Of course," he replied without pause. "Send me her number, and I'll track her last known location."

"Thank you, Alex," Ruth said, relief flooding her tone.

"No worries."

Meanwhile, Josephine sat on a cold metal bench, arms folded tight against her chest.

Frustration etched itself into every line of her face.

"Perfect," she muttered, glaring at her dead phone. "Stranded in the middle of nowhere, and this ancient thing doesn't even have a charger anyone recognizes."

A voice from behind made her jump. "You've got plenty of money, don't you? Why not just buy a new phone?"

She spun around, her face brightening at the sight of Alex.

He stood there with that same cool smirk.

"Alex!" she exclaimed, rushing over and grabbing his hands. "Thank God you're here!"

He arched an eyebrow. "What are you doing in this part of town?"

She fished a small card from her pocket and showed it to him. "Do you know this place?"

Glancing at the card, Alex nodded. "I can take you there."

"Great! I'm already late." She tugged him toward the bus station.

"Let's just grab a taxi," Alex offered.

"Taxi?" she asked, grimacing. "No way. That's expensive."

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"I'll pay," he said.

A relieved grin spread across her face. "Well, in that case taxi it is!"

Inside the cab, Alex eyed Josephine suspiciously.

"Why are you going to Southern Community Bank? Didn't you have money left from the last time?"

She blew out a breath. "You wouldn't believe how many orphanages depend on us around Vancouver. Mom shares our funds to help keep them running; they need it even more than we do."

Alex knew the type-good people who never hesitated to give, even when they had nothing to spare.

"So, what's this bank trip about?" he asked.

She smiled, and for a moment, Alex found his heart skipping a beat.

Josephine was beautiful in a refreshingly real way-no makeup, no fancy clothes, just her authentic, tomboyish charm.

"There's some good news," she explained. "Our orphanage in the slum area is finally being renovated. But we're still short on funds to finish everything."

Alex frowned. He had invested millions into that place. "Didn't anyone else pitch in for the rebuilding?"

"They helped with roads, gardens, and a few small houses," she said, rubbing her temples, "but we still need furniture and proper livable rooms. About a hundred thousand dollars more. If the bank's generous, maybe fifty- if we're lucky." 1

Upon arriving at the bank, an assistant whisked Josephine straight into a private office, while Alex was instructed to wait in the lobby.

Inside, Josephine found herself facing Mr. Kelvin-a heavysset man crammed behind a mahogany desk, his bulbous stomach pressing against the edge.

His eyes gleamed the instant she stepped in.

"Well, if it isn't Ms. Everheart from the orphanage," Kelvin drawled. "What can I do for you today?"

She swallowed her distaste and got right to the point. "I'm here for the loan we discussed last year. We need a hundred thousand dollars to finish rebuilding the orphanage. The same interest rate as you promise before."

Kelvin leaned back, stroking his chin with greasy satisfaction. "A hundred grand isn't pocket change, Ms. Everheart."

Her voice remained level. "I understand that. But you promised you'd help us. Even half would be appreciated."

A low, smug chuckle rumbled from his throat. "It's not just about the money. It's also about...my mood."

Josephine's brow creased. "Excuse me?"

He leaned forward, voice slithering into a filthy whisper. "We both know how this works. I've had my eye on you for a while. One night with me, and I'll sign off on the money-fifty thousand, a hundred thousand, whatever you need."

Her eyes flashed with righteous anger. "Kelvin, do you even realize what you're suggesting?"

He sneered, openly shameless.

"Of course I do. And you're in no position to refuse, are you? No other bank in Vancouver will grant you a loan if I

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blacklist you. Your orphanage will crumble, and you'll be left with nothing but regret. Think about it: one night. Such a small price to pay to save those poor kids."

Her face went ice-cold. "Are you blackmailing me?"

"Call it a fair trade," Kelvin replied, shrugging with faux indifference. "I need a companion for the night, and you need funds. Win-win, don't you think?"

Her glare turned deadly and stood. "You are absolutely revolting." Kelvin slammed a meaty palm on his desk. "Sit down! Walk out that door, and I'll make sure no one in this city gives your orphanage a single dime. Your orphanage will rot in front of your eyes."

She shot to her feet, words trembling with fury. "I won't do any dirty deals with you, Kelvin. You disgust me. In fact, just looking at your pig face turns my stomach."

His expression darkened to an ugly red. "You dare insult me?! You should be honored I'd even consider you!" His curled as he spat, "Acting high and mighty, as

if you're some saint, when you're just a whore-

"Shut your mouth," Josephine growled, her voice shaking.

He gave her a vile smirk. "I'll ruin your orphanage with a single phone call."

She stepped closer, her gaze unwavering. "I'd like to see you try."

Kelvin's face contorted with rage. "Mark my words, you'll be begging for my help soon enough!"

"Go to hell!" Josephine roared, grabbing the steaming cup of coffee on the desk and hurling it into his face.

Kelvin shrieked, stumbling back as the scorching liquid scalded his skin. He bellowed like a wounded beast, clutching his reddening cheek.

"You... you bitch!" he howled, lurching forward in a blind fury.

But Josephine was faster. In one swift motion, she drove her sneakers into Kelvin's crotch. "Go to Hell you bastard!"

He collapsed instantly, howling in agony, his face mottled purple as he writhed on the floor.

Josephine stood over him, her voice trembling with rage. "You make me sick."

Without a backward glance, she stormed out, leaving his enraged, pain-filled screams echoing down the corridor behind her.

Josephine barreled straight into Alex, who had been lingering by the door. Startled, she glared up at him.

"What are you doing here?" she snapped.

He shrugged, a faint smirk on his lips. "Just checking to make sure you were all right."

His attention drifted past her to Mr. Kelvin, still sprawled on the floor, wheezing in pain. Alex's eyes gleamed with a cold satisfaction; he silently thanked Josephine for handling the situation before he had to.

If he'd intervened, Kelvin might never have used his birdie again.

"We're done here," Josephine declared, her tone sharp.

She spun on her heel and strode away. Her mood was as sour as it looked.

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Suddenly, Kelvin's voice thundered through the air, dripping with malice. "Stop right there! You think you can assault me and just waltz off? Who do you think I am?!"

On his command, security guards scrambled into a tight formation at the main entrance, blocking their escape.

"You little bitch!" Kelvin roared, lumbering to his feet.

"Kick me, will you? I'll make sure you never see daylight again!" Spit flew from his lips as he lunged at Josephine, hand raised to strike.