

The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 171[1,356 words]

Chapter 171

Florence and Jack glowered by the window, practically brimming with poisonous contempt as they tore into Alex's name.

"I swear to God," Jack hissed, slamming his palm on the table, "the world's gone completely insane if that incompetent asswipe actually owns this hotel."

Florence leaned forward with a vicious glare, her words dripping with venom. "You're telling me. That leech is just mooching off Jasmine's good graces. Without her pity, he'd be homeless, rolling around in his own filth somewhere."

Jack gave a low, humorless laugh,

eyes brimming with envy

"He probably crawled on all fours, begging like a stray dog to get this place under his name. And don't even get me started on the 'man-whore' shtick-if I wanted to stoop that low, I'd blow that loser out of the water. At least I've got a shred of dignity."

Florence scoffed. "Ha! Don't flatter yourself, Jack. No one can sink to Alex's level. He's the champion of freeloaders. Now, Charles-there's a real man: young, shrewd, polished. Didn't have to sell his soul for success."

Jack nodded so aggressively it looked like his head might pop off.

"Right? If that shameless con artist Alex hadn't wheedled his way into Jasmine's life, Charles would be ruling Vancouver."

"You said it," Florence agreed, voice ringing with disdain. She shot Charles an approving look. 1

"Honestly, Charles, you're at the prime age for marriage. Why not settle down with Sophia? You could crank out a baby, and Alfred Kingston would probably roll out the red carpet for you. Instant promotion to top dog in Vancouver."

"Mom, are you for real right now?" Sophia all but growled, shooting her mother a lethal glare. "This conversation is completely out of left field."

Florence threw her hands up. "Just a little dose of reality, sweetheart. Marry Charles, pop out an heir, and watch him become the new king. It's simple math."

Sophia opened her mouth to snap back, but Charles lifted a hand gently. "Alright, let's not let our food turn into ice. Relax and enjoy the meal."

His words worked, at least momentarily. Florence and Jack stuffed their faces, seething commentary on pause for the sake of food.

A short while later, Florence dabbed daintily at her mouth with a napkin. "Jack and

I have business to discuss. We'll leave you two... alone." She gave Jack a meaningful side-eye.

"Uh-huh," Jack said, rising abruptly.

They scuttled away, smirking like they were leaving a 'Do Not Disturb' sign behind.

With them gone, Charles leaned closer to Sophia. "I really am sorry about the mess I made with that Lancaster Kingston partnership. I know it caused a stir. Let me make it up to you."

Sophia sighed, exhaustion flickering in her eyes. "It's water under the bridge, and you've already straightened it out. Let's not dig it all up again."

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Charles's lips curled into a smirk, just shy of a genuine smile, "Gilad to hear that. By the way, I recall you did some modeling before? I was quite the admirer. And as your mother said, it all makes sense."

What does?" Sophia asked.

"The marriage and the baby," Charles said with a chuckle. Maybe if I do those, my father would finally acknowledge me."

Sophia searched for a way to steer the conversation elsewhere.

"Um... excuse me, I need to use the restroom." She practically fled the table.

Charles watched her walk away, his gaze brimming with predatory intent.

The second she disappeared, he slipped a small packet of white powder from his pocket, emptied it into her wine, and swirled it lazily.

The whole gesture reeked of smug satisfaction.

A few tables over, Alex was lingering discreetly when a waiter approached him.

"Sir, as you instructed, I've been keeping an eye out for that guest," the waiter murmured. "I just saw him with Miss Sophia... he put something in her drink."

Alex's features hardened. "You're absolutely sure?"

The waiter nodded, anxiety lacing his voice. "Clear as day."

Lyra, seated next to Alex, narrowed her eyes. "Is there a problem?"

Alex rose to his feet, expression grim. "I need to step in. You two go ahead without me."

At that exact moment, Sophia returned from the restroom.

Charles instantly passed her the spiked wine, his smile practically oozing false warmth. "Sophia, here's to fresh starts. Cheers."

"Fine," she said flatly. "But after this, I'm leaving. I've got too much on my plate tomorrow."

"No rush," Charles replied airily, taking a long gulp of his own drink while watching her closely.

Sophia lifted the wine to her lips-only to be halted by a sharp voice slicing through the tense silence:

"I wouldn't drink that if I were you."

She spun around and saw Alex marching toward them. "What's your deal now?" she demanded.

Alex pointed at the glass in her hand. "Charles spiked it. Don't let that trash get the better of you."

She blinked in confusion, her gaze ping-ponging between Alex and Charles. Charles's expression faltered momentarily before slipping into an innocent grin. "Oh, here we go again. Alex, you're delusional."

Alex looked ready to lunge at him. "You and I both know what you did, you snake."

Charles turned to Sophia, his face an expert mask of wounded innocence. "Sophia, do you really believe I'd stoop so low as to drug you?"

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Sophia chewed on her lip, feeling torn. "Alex, got any actual proof?"

Alex gestured to the waiter by his side. "He saw everything

"Right," the waiter agreed, voice steady despite the tension. He stabbed a finger in Charles's direction. "I literally watched you pour something in her wine."

Sophia folded her arms. "That's still kind of thin, Alex. I mean, you just have this guy's word. He is your worker."

Alex's temper flashed. "Oh, come on. Why the hell would I make this up? If you need a full-blown CSI team, be my guest."

Sophia let out a shaky breath.

She'd always seen Charles as an upright member of Kingston family, but Alex rarely invented such serious accusations. Then again...

Charles's tone turned indulgent, like he was speaking to a confused child.

"Sophia, this is ridiculous. If that glass is tampered with, I'd blame Alex. He owns this restaurant, the wine is from his place."

Charles added, "Look at him- clearly he wants to sabotage me. Tries to act like a knight in shining armor in front of you just to make me look bad. It's beyond pathetic."

Sophia squinted at Alex. "Why would you stage something like that?"

"He hates me, that's why.: Charles sighed dramatically. "He and my sister would love nothing more than to see me crash and burn. And maybe dragging you into the scandal is his twisted way to destroy both of us. He's obviously desperate." Sophia pursed her lips. "Alex... is any of that true? Did you set all this up?" Alex clenched his jaw. "I don't need to stoop to your level, Charles. I'm telling you Sophia, he spiked your damn

drink."

But Sophia's features hardened, disbelief flickering in her eyes. "It's just... it sounds so over-the-top. Are you sure you aren't lying?" 2

Before Alex could speak again, Florence and Jack swept back in like a two- person SWAT team.

Florence snatched Sophia's wine off the table and slung the contents into Alex's face, drenching him.

"You piece of garbage!" she snarled. "Sophia divorced you. Move on already, you pathetic creep. Don't you dare sling your ridiculous accusations around here."

Jack sized Alex up, curling his lip in disdain. "You can't stand the fact she's not yours anymore, so you're going after any man who so much as looks her way. That is straight-up psycho behavior, dude. Get lost."

Florence jabbed Alex hard in the chest. "And if you're actually jealous of Charles, then grow a damn spine and compete with him fair and square-don't make up insane stories. You look so small and desperate it's almost pitiful."

She glowered at Alex, her tone ice-cold. "I don't want you in my daughter life anymore, got it?"

Alex's eyes flared with pain as he wiped wine from his face. "So Sophia, do you really think I just cooked this all up?"

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Sophia was looking at Charles then let out a short, bitter laugh.

"Alex, you got handed one little restaurant from some sugar mama, and now you

think you can play in Charles's league? Get a grip. You're still nobody."

She instantly looked like she wanted to swallow those words back, but pride

sealed her mouth shut.

Today's Bonus Offer

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"Feally! You have spoken what you truly thought of me." Alex's voice quavered with disappointment.

He forced a wry simile, though hurt was etched across his face.

For the longest time, Alex believed he shared a deep, special connection with Sophia.

He did everything in his power to nurture that bond.

Yet, from Sophia's perspective, there wasn't even a glimmer of true attachment..

It was as if Alex kept trying to construct a bridge out of thin air.

Eventually, every man must recognize when to press on and when to walk away from a futile endeavor.

"Fine, Sophia. I have overstepped my boundaries," Alex admitted, his tone laced with resignation.

"Maybe you're not even worried about Charles drugging your drink. In fact, you probably hoped he would-so you'd have a convenient excuse to get together with him. Am I correct?"

"What nonsense are you spouting?" Sophia snapped, frowning in anger.

Florance stepped between them, throwing a scornful glance at Alex. "If you already know all that, why don't you step aside? You have nothing to do with our lives anymore so back off!"

Jack sneered, his contempt almost palpable. "Mom, do you really think this loser is willing to let Sophia go? He's just after her beauty and money. He's a freak who doesn't know when to quit! Get lost, you pathetic excuse for a man!"

In that instant, Alex realized Florance and Jack must have known Charles planned to spike Sophia's drink-and had done nothing to stop it.

He could feel himself sinking into a situation he never should have been part of.

Perhaps it was time to accept that his connection with Sophia had reached its end.

One must know when to cut ties and move on.

Sophia opened her mouth, ready to defend herself, but Alex abruptly interjected,

"I am really sorry for sticking my nose where it didn't belong. I wish the best for you and Charles."

It was Sophia's turn to reel in shock.

Her expression was a maelstrom of disbelief, disappointment, and regret. Never

in a million years had she expected Alex to speak to her like this-did he truly think so little of her?

"Alex! I'm utterly disappointed in you!" Sophia hissed through gritted teeth.

She spun on her heel and stormed off, her emotions dangerously close to boiling over.

Rooted to the spot, Alex felt anger and heartbreak crashing over him in waves. Florance turned away as well, tossing a barbed comment over her shoulder. "Good. If you know your place, stop looking for my daughter."

Jack added a mocking laugh. "You're one twisted individual "

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At that moment, Charles approached.

The charming smile he had worn earlier mutated into a derisive smirk.

"Alex, everything you said was correct. I spiked Sophia's drink. So what? Her family's practically begging me to marry into it," Charles whispered coldly into Alex's car.

"Besides, who's going to believe you? Sophia's enchanted by me, and she'll always have my back. Nothing you say can change that. I bet you're fuming right now, aren't you?

"Helpless, too. Actually, I should thank you this little fiasco only strengthened our bond. Soon enough, she'll be completely in love with me and begging for my bed. And after I'm done with her, I'll tear her entire family to shreds until nothing but ashes remain."

He threw his head back and cackled with wicked glee.

At last, the gentlemanly façade had fallen away, revealing something far more poisonous, like a serpent poised to strike.

Seething with fury, Alex clenched his fists so tightly his knuckles cracked, desperately trying not to lash out.

Charles went on, his voice a venomous hiss: "You saved Jasmine's life when she was supposed to die. You twisted her mind to make me look like the villain."

"But trust me—I'll be the winner in the end. You'll watch Sophia become my personal plaything. I'll drug her whenever I see fit, let others toy with her, record every sick moment, and spread it around until she finally understands just how cruel this world can be."

That was the final straw. Alex lost what little self-control he had left and slammed his fist into Charles's face.

Charles stumbled back onto a nearby table, sending shockwaves of alarm through Sophia and Florance, who had already been walking away.

"Alex!" Sophia cried in disbelief. "What the fuck are you doing?"

"He..." Alex began, but the words died in his throat.

He knew she would never believe him.

Jack seized the moment, hurling insults at Alex. "you must be fucking jealous Sophia so close to Charles!"

Sophia stormed up to Alex, her heart pounding with fear that Charles might sever his family's partnership with the Kingstons because of him. Without hesitation, she struck him hard across the face. "Stay out of my life!"

All Alex could see was the storm of pain, fear, disbelief, and rage swirling in Sophia's eyes.

The sting of her slap was nothing compared to the shattering pain in his heart. Sophia turned to Charles with trembling concern. "Mister Charles, are you okay?"

"It hurts," Charles groaned, feigning a serious injury.

"Let's get out of here," Sophia said, her voice tight with mixed emotions.

"Yeah," Florance added. "The owner here is just some nouveau riche jerk who thinks he can flex his mor beat people up. We'll report him to the police and shut down this place."

and

"Don't worry, Mom," Jack chimed in. "I'll plaster this all over social media: the owner assaulted Charles

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Kingston. We'll see how long this stupid restaurant lasts. What an arrogant loser does he think money makes him untouchable?"

it's fine," Charles said, stopping them and shooting Alex contemptuous glare.

"I know you still love Sophia, but you toyed with my sister too. You're just greedy. Owning a single restaurant doesn't grant you a throne over everyone else. Don't be ridiculous. And learn how to be a real gentleman."

"What a great man you are, Charles," Florance gushed, practically glowing with approval.

"Let's just get away from this place," Sophia muttered, her voice full of conflicted emotions. "I don't want to be here any longer."

Jack aimed one last sneer at Alex. "Did you hear her? You're disgusting. Stay away from her-permanently."

And with that, they all turned their backs on Alex, leaving him standing there alone-heartbroken, outraged, and drowning in a pain that felt like it would never

end.

'There comes a time when you have to stop crossing oceans for people who wouldn't even jump a puddle for you.'

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Alex watched as Sophia and the others walked out.

Jasmine and Raymond had already left, leaving him alone.

He took a moment to steady his heart, his mind racing with thoughts of Charles. He had just released the monster

back into the water, and now it had only grown bigger and even more dangerous.

Suddenly, a beautiful woman approached his table, pulling out a chair and sitting down in front of him.

"Jasmine?" Alex looked at her, surprised. "How do you know I'm here?"

"I know everything that happens in Vancouver," Jasmine said smoothly. "It's hard not to notice when the biggest hotel and restaurant in the city changes its name." She gestured for a red wine to the waiter.

"I'm starting to regret asking you to release Charles," Alex admitted.

"Don't." Jasmine tilted her head, her eyes sharp.

"Even without you asking, I might have released him anyway. You just added the tipping point."

"My mother already thinks I'm too cruel for doing all this to my own brother- especially after he got stabbed. She nearly kicked me out of the family. If I didn't return Charles to his position, I would've been disowned."

Alex didn't know if Jasmine was saying this to ease his guilt or if she truly meant

it.

She was the type to do anything for him.

"Let's just say we gave him a second chance." Jasmine lifted her glass as the waiter served the wine. She swirled it slowly before taking a sip. "But if I catch him again... maybe there won't be a next time."

"There might not be a next time," Alex sighed, rubbing his temple. "He's getting smarter and more dangerous. Someone might just decide to erase him instead of giving him another chance."

Jasmine laughed, low and amused. "I heard you've cured some very important people, and a lot of them still owe you. If you asked them to take care of Charles, I doubt he'd live to see the next sunrise."

"Why would I want to do that?" Alex frowned, though the thought had crossed his mind before.

Jasmine exhaled slowly, her gaze steady. "Reason? He's into Sophia. Isn't that everything you asked me for help with? Sophia Lancaster."

The air grew heavy between them.

Will he really kill Charles because of Sophia? The thought gnawed at Alex.

That woman already asked him to stay out of her life. They have no connection anymore. And if he truly loves her... he should give her freedom.

Before he could dwell on it further, a bodyguard in a dark suit stormed into the restaurant, his face tense with

urgency.

"Miss Kingston! There's bad news!"

Jasmine's brows lifted. "Yes? What is it?"

"It's Miss Kelly! She has been kidnapped!"

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Jasmine's expression darkened instantly. "What did you just say?"

The bodyguard swallowed hard. "We were keeping an eye on her in secret, just as you instructed. But an unknown group stormed in our secret location and took Miss Kelly. We had ten men protecting her-six are dead, and the other four are in the hospital!"

Jasmine's grip on her wine glass tightened. "Do you know who's behind this?"

"Charles." The bodyguard hesitated before correcting himself. "I ... but the one who let them into Vancouver and led them to Kelly's secret location was Charles."

mean, the kidnappers are Jericho Kane's people

"Jericho Kane?" Jasmine's frown deepened.

"Yes. They left a ransom note. They're demanding that you and Mr. Alex meet them at Kane Mansion in Vermont."

Jasmine's jaw clenched. Her blood burned with fury. So this is it. The real enemy hiding behind Charles has finally come clean.

Jericho Kane. The man who had been using Charles as a pawn against his own family.

Her nails dug into her palm. How dare he target Kelly? How dare he drag her into this war?

This had gone too far.

"Contact all the Kingston family," Jasmine ordered coldly. I need our strongest fighters as backup. Since Jericho wants a war-" she exhaled sharply, eyes gleaming with rage- "I'll give him one."

An hour later, Alex and Jasmine stood in a private hangar, the sleek jet before them ready for takeoff. The engines hummed low, cutting through the crisp night

air.

Alex's gaze shifted to the burly man standing beside Jasmine. Behind him, about thirty fighters stood at attention.

The man's muscles rippled under his clothes, his knuckles rough and hardened with years of combat.

He was no ordinary bodyguard-this was a man who had seen war.

"Alex, sorry to bother you," Jasmine said as she approached him. "I owe you one for lending a hand to save Kelly."

"It's all right. I don't mind helping a friend in need." Alex gave a small smile. "Besides, they put my name in the note. I don't have much of a choice."

Jericho's men had made it clear-he and Jasmine were to go to Kane Mansion together. There was no backing out.

"Let me introduce you to Gabriel Wolf," Jasmine gestured to the imposing man beside her. "He's one of the best fighters in the Kingston family and the leader of our elite group."

"Mr. Wolf, a pleasure to meet you." Alex nodded in acknowledgment.

Gabriel eyed him up and down. "You're Alex?" His voice was low, heavy with judgment. "Was it you who saved Miss Jasmine's from dangerous a few times?" "In a way, yes." Alex nodded again.

"What do you mean, 'in a way'?" Gabriel scoffed.

"Stop being vague. Did you use some shady tricks to win? Are you trying to get on Jasmine's good side? Are you sure you're not a spy?" His voice was laced with suspicion.

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Alex simply gave Gabriel a cold stare and chose to remain

Aon does not concern himself with the opinion of sheep

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Tasinine shot Mr. Wolf a glare so fierce it could've cut through steel.

"Listen, Wolf. Be cautious if you want, but stop pointing fingers at Alex. He's the only one here I actually trust." WolfGabriel Wolf-folded his arms and threw a sneer Alex's way.

"Word on the street is he's a two-bit con artist who sweettalks rich women out of their money. Wouldn't surprise me if he's the rat in the room."

Jasmine's anger flared. She jabbed a finger at him. "Another word out of you, and I'll shred our contract right here and now."

W UP

Gabriel raised his hands in mock surrender. "Fine. If you wanna cozy up to a possible backstabber, be my guest." Jasmine ignored him, pivoting toward Alex with a remorseful look.

"I'm sorry. My top guards are in Los Angeles with my father, and the rest followed Charles. These elite soldiers? They're from my mother's side of the family."

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Alex shrugged, calm as ever. "Doesn't matter. We're here for one reason-to get Kelly back. We're not exactly on vacation."

She offered a small smile of gratitude. "I appreciate that."

With a curt nod to the gathering crowd, Jasmine barked, "Alright, everyone. On the plane. Let's move."

They boarded the private jet and took off, streaking across the sky toward the Vermont border.

Their destination: Jericho Kane's secluded estate. The tension in the cabin was thick enough to taste-every glance from Gabriel was laced with distrust, every exchange loaded with unspoken threats.

When the plane finally touched down on a private airstrip, a solemn figure in a tailored butler's uniform greeted

them.

He bowed low. "Miss Kingston, welcome to Vermont. Mr. Kane is expecting you in the main hall. Please allow me to drive you."

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He gestured toward a glossy black limousine, but Jasmine gave him a hard, unblinking stare. "No. I don't trust a ride I didn't arrange. We brought our own convoy."

The butler's expression flickered, but he stepped aside. "As you wish."

The plane's cargo hold opened, and three black SUVs rumbled out onto the tarmac.

Without a word, they followed the limousine through winding roads that snaked up a steep hill.

Jericho's men seemed to materialize out of the fog, perched among the trees and shadows, eyes cold and unwelcoming.

Up ahead, Kane's mansion loomed like a fortress on a mountaintop-a stark reminder that they were deep in enemy territory.

The SUVs halted in a gravel driveway, the crunch of tires echoing like gunfire in the still air. "Wait here," the butler said, voice clipped. "Mr. Kane has been informed of your arrival."

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Inside the grand entrance, Jasmine, Alex, and the rest were greeted by an unsettling silence.

It felt like stepping into a cage of predators.

The walls seemed to have eyes. No one offered a seat.

Minutes dragged by, growing thicker with tension, until they turned into hours.

"What the hell is going on?" Gabriel finally snarled, his patience snapping. "They got us standing around like idiots!"

Jasmine pressed her lips together. She had no answer.

And Alex just watched, impassive and silent.

Then Jericho Kane made his entrance. He moved with a leisurely arrogance, as if every step he took was a command for others to cower.

Behind him, Vetala Kanchard and a squad of pumped-up goons advanced like a storm front, eyes full of challenge. Jericho's smile was cold enough to freeze a river. "Apologies for the delay, Miss Kingston. Urgent matters. No offense intended."

Jasmine cut right to the point. "Cut the bullshit, Kane. Where's Kelly? Let her go."

A low chuckle rolled from Jericho's throat. "Let her go? Just like that?" He shook his head.

"Kelly killed one of my most prized students. If I release her without compensation, I lose every ounce of respect in this region. That's not how I do business."

Jasmine's voice turned razor-sharp. "So what's your price?"

Jericho's lips curled in a predatory grin. "Simple. You owe me for my loss. That student wasn't just any grunt-I poured a fortune into him. Training. Medicine. The works. He was meant to succeed me. I want half of your Kingston holdings in Vancouver. And that's me being generous."

Jasmine's eyes flashed with anger. "Half my business? Over a single death? You're delusional."

Jericho spread his hands. "It's a drop in the bucket for a family like yours. You'll hardly feel it."

"And if I tell you to shove your demands where the sun doesn't shine?"

He let out a soft laugh. "Then Kelly's future remains... bleak."

She clenched her jaw. "You're threatening me."

"I'm offering you a choice." He leaned in, his voice dipping ominously. "Or we can settle it with a death match."

Jasmine's blood ran cold at the phrase-a brutal, ancient means of settling grudges.

One side won everything; the other side lost it all. Three rounds of no-holds- barred combat, winner takes all.

Gabriel jumped in before Jasmine could speak. "A death match? Bring it on. I'll rip through your whole damn team."

Jericho's grin widened, hungry for violence. "Excellent."

Jasmine's face twisted in anger. She spun on Gabriel. "What the hell are you

doing, Wolf? You don't speak for

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mel"

He shrugged, a cocky grin on his face. "I'm just doing us a favor, Ms. Kingston. I

can handle them."

Her voice dropped to a low hiss. "And if you lose? That'll cost me everything,"

He snorted. "I'm not losing to these clowns. Just watch."

Jericho's men watched the exchange with quiet amusement Finally, Jericho purred, "So, Miss Kingston, the deal stands. Either cough up half your Vancouver empire, or stake it all on a death match."

Jasmine couldn't swallow the injustice. She refused to let him walk away with half her legacy. "Fine. We'll do it. But first, show me Kelly. I want to see her alive."

Jericho laughed softly, snapping his fingers. A pair of guards shoved Kelly forward-her wrists tied, her body bruised, face swollen.

She staggered, but her eyes burned with defiance.

"She put up quite a fight," Jericho said, sounding almost impressed. "We had to teach her a lesson. She was like an unbroken stallion-no discipline whatsoever."

Jasmine ran up to Kelly, slicing the ropes loose with a small knife. "Kelly, talk to me. You alright?"

Kelly swallowed hard. "Just a few bruises. I'll survive."

As she stepped aside, Kelly locked eyes with Alex for a brief moment-an unspoken exchange of relief and concern passing between them.

Jericho's voice cut in, silky and smug. "See? I'm a man of my word. Now I expect you to be one of yours. The contract is ready."

A servant stepped forward, proffering a neatly printed document.

Jasmine scanned the text and then signed with a flourish, her heart hammering.

She couldn't show fear, not now.

The moment her signature was on the paper, Jericho's confidence blazed. "I admire your courage, Miss Kingston. I really do."

Gabriel stepped up, practically vibrating with eagerness. "I'll take the first round. Let's see what you've got, Kane."

Jericho barely looked at him. He flicked a lazy hand toward a slender, sinewy man named Sam.

"Go ahead," he drawled.

Gabriel eyed the newcomer, a cruel grin on his face. "That's all? I've taken down bigger rats than you in alleyways."

Sam didn't say a word. He simply rushed forward, sprang into the air, and unleashed a punch that looked as soft as a tap on the shoulder.

Gabriel's eyes bulged. He went rigid, then dropped like a sack of bricks. The floor thundered as his body hit the ground. Silence blanketed the hall.

A referee rushed in to count, but Gabriel stayed limp, eyes rolled back in his head. "Knockout!" the official declared, "First round goes to Jericho Kane."

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Jasmine stood there, fists balled in disbelief. Gabriel had fallen in less than a second.

She could almost feel Jericho's smug delight filling the air

Her gut twisted. They were down one round, and the stakes had never been higher.

If they lost again, the cost wouldn't just be money-it would be the whole Kingston.

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"How could this be?" Jasmine was stunned, her confidence shattered by the unexpected defeat.

No one had anticipated Gabriel would fall so easily-especially to someone who looked so weak.

One of the vice leaders rushed forward, grabbing Gabriel from the arena and shaking him awake.

Gabriel groaned, then blinked as he came to.

"So, I lost?"

He stood up, rubbing his head, but instead of regret, a smirk stretched across his face.

"I'm sorry, Miss Kingston. I didn't expect to meet someone that strong," he said, shrugging

"But don't worry! My vice leader will secure the next two wins. We can still turn this around."

He turned to Karl. "Karl, you're up next. Make sure you win this round."

"Yes, leader!" Karl responded and immediately stepped toward the arena. "Stop it!" Kelly suddenly shouted, her voice sharp with fury.

"You're losing on purpose!"

"Don't you dare send another one of your men in! Jasmine, these people are trying to drag us down!"

"Shut up," Gabriel shot back. "We're trying to win. That man was just a hidden master. But don't worry, Miss Kingston, we've got this."

Karl locked eyes with Gabriel, exchanging a silent signal, then rushed into the arena.

Jasmine's stomach twisted. If Karl entered and lost, according to the contract, Kingston would be finished.

"Stop!" Kelly yelled again, desperation in her voice.

Jasmine stepped forward, her voice firm. "We haven't decided our second fighter! No one fights without my approval!"

Jericho Kane let out a cold laugh. "I don't care about your approval. If someone from your side steps into the arena, then that's your fighter. It's as simple as that."

Something was very wrong.

Kelly saw Karl just steps away from entering.

She knew words wouldn't stop him. Without hesitation, she forced herself forward, rushing into the arena ahead of him.

"I'll be the second fighter," Kelly announced, her voice steady.

Karl skidded to a halt, just one step behind her.

"Damn it, you're injured! You'll only make us lose! Get out of the arena and let me handle this!" Karl growled.

"Don't you dare talk nonsense! Get down now!" Kelly snapped at Karl.

But he hesitated for a moment, glancing at Gabriel.

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In that split second, they exchanged a look-silent communication through their eyes and subtle hand gestures.

The message was clear.

No matter what, Karl had to be the second fighter.

"You really don't understand, do you, woman?" Karl sneered and stepped toward Kelly, his fist already rising.

But before he could land a single hit-bam!

Kelly moved twice as fast, striking Karl's neck and groin in one swift motion.

A man a head taller than her slumped to the ground like a rag doll.

Like nothing had happened, Kelly stepped toward the center of the arena, where the skinny man from the first round still stood, watching.

"Start the fight now!" Kelly demanded, her voice sharp.

The butler shrugged. "Fine. Both of you
ay begin."

Without hesitation, Kelly launched a brutal kick straight at her opponent.

Crack!

The skinny man flew backward like a broken kite, slamming against the wall before crumpling to the ground- completely unconscious.

The arena fell into stunned silence.

Kelly turned, her eyes burning with fury as she glared at Gabriel. "I've had enough of you playing the victim with these weaklings."

Gabriel chuckled darkly. "You kicked him before he was ready. That's cheating." Then, his smirk faded, and his tone turned cold.

"And since you hit Karl-one of my men-don't think I'll let it slide."

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He turned to Jasmine. "Miss Kingston, this woman attacked one of my people. I demand justice. If you ignore this, you'll be making an enemy of my entire group." As he spoke, his men moved in.

One by one, they surrounded Jasmine, their weapons drawn, their blades and guns pointed at her and Alex. Jasmine's voice cut through the tension. "Jericho, is this your doing?"

Jericho leaned back, watching the scene unfold with amusement.

He shook his head. "I'm an honest man. I don't interfere in a family's internal disputes. If you can't control your own people, don't drag me into your mess."

Jasmine's jaw clenched. "Good. Good."

Her fingers curled into fists. Things were about to get ugly.

"Miss Kingston, I suggest you stay put. We don't want to hurt you-we just demand justice." Gabriel smiled, but his eyes were cold.

2/4

Chapter 175

"What do you want?" Jasmine asked, her voice steady.

"We'll break Kelly's arms and legs for attacking our people" Gabriel said casually, as if discussing a minor Inconvenience.

Then, he smirked. "And since you'll have no fighter left, the next match will be fought by our people."

Jasmine's expression darkened. "I will never let that happen."

Kelly was like a sister to her.

Gabriel sighed, then pressed a gun to Jasmine's head. "This isn't a negotiation. Either you let us do it, or you die."

Two of his men stepped onto the arena, grabbing Kelly by the arms. One of them muttered, "Don't resist, or we'll put a bullet in Jasmine's head."

Kelly's fists clenched, but she forced herself to walk toward Jasmine, her steps heavy with frustration.

"Break her legs and arms," Gabriel ordered.

And then-smack!

Gabriel's command was cut short as Alex stepped forward and slapped him across the face.

The sound echoed through the arena.

Everyone froze, eyes wide in shock.

Gabriel's head snapped back at an unnatural angle-his neck twisted grotesquely.

He collapsed to the ground like a dead weight.

Silence.

His men stared in horror, unable to process what had just happened.

Alex's voice broke through the stillness. "Did you all forget about me?"

Gabriel's people snapped out of their shock, immediately raising their guns- aiming at Jasmine, Kelly, and Alex.

Alex didn't flinch. His tone remained calm, yet it carried an edge that sent a chill down their spines.

"I don't want unnecessary bloodshed," he said, his voice steady. "Are you sure you want to make me your enemy?"

A heavy tension settled over the hall.

Gabriel-their leader-was dead. Their vice leader was still unconscious.

Uncertainty flickered in their eyes.

The hall became stagnant.

Then, Alex took a slow step forward. His gaze swept over them, sharp as a blade.

"Put your guns down," he said. Not a threat.

A command.

In that moment, genuine terror settled deep into their bones.

3/4

Chapter 175

It was as if they were being watched by ruthless predators, mean instant death.

Today's Bonus Offer

**The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 176[
1,068 words]**

Chapter 176

"Listen, we don't want any trouble." One of the bodyguards eased his grip on his weapon, stepping away from the

"camage.

"We've got no loyalty to anyone but our paychecks.

"Our boss is dead; we're only here because we're paid to guard Miss Jasmine. If she keeps signing the checks, we'll stay out of this mess."

A handful of others nodded, clearly relieved at the easy out

Whether or not Gabriel had been selling himself or all of them out as Jericho's spy hardly mattered to them- money was money, and if there was a safer way to earn it, they wouldn't miss the chance.

Jasmine gave them a curt nod. "I'll keep you on the payroll, Just don't meddle in this fight."

"Works for us," one replied. The rest quickly agreed.

Jericho clearly saw that Gabriel's people had stopped fighting for Jasmine.

"That damn Gabriel," he muttered, his face twisting in anger. "I told him to pay his men, yet he used the money all for himself. That fucking greed of his... fits him right to die."

His eyes darkened with fury. Without another word, he made a subtle hand sign.

One of the big guys standing beside him saw the signal and immediately stepped forward, making his way toward

the arena.

Meanwhile, on the arena floor, Kelly stood alone, covered in bruises and half- healed wounds.

She glared at the towering brute lumbering toward her.

He cracked his neck, a smug grin twisting his lips.

"Didn't I beat you senseless and drag you off once before?" he jeered. "You must be a glutton for punishment, coming back for more."

Kelly spat blood, refusing to show any weakness. "Real tough guy, aren't you? Only took twenty men backing you up to take me down."

From the sidelines, the butler barked out, "Begin!"

The brute charged forward, fists raised.

Kelly braced herself, ready to fight-when suddenly, Alex stepped in, placing a firm hand on her shoulder.

"Surrender," he said quietly. "Let me handle this."

Kelly's eyes flicked to him, understanding immediately.

She was battered, no match in her current state-even if this big guy was only her equal on a good day.

She let out a breath, pain lancing through her ribs.

"I surrender," she announced, taking a step back.

The brute snarled, "Don't think you're walking away that easily! I'm not done with you!"

1/3

Chapter 176

Alex slid between them with casual confidence. "You're not worthy of her time."

"Go to hell!" the big guy roared, swinging a fist aimed right at Alex's skull.

In the blink of an eye, he froze,

His entire body stiffened, then collapsed to the floor like a marionette with its strings cut. Everyone gasped-no one had seen Alex move, let alone strike.

Alex shook his head. "Thanks for the free point."

From the far side of the arena, Jericho's brow furrowed in abger.

His gaze shifted to Vetala, the strongest fighter in his stable Vetala stepped forward, sword in hand, eyes darting to the fallen brute.

Without warning, Vetala drove the blade through the man's chest.

A strangled cry tore through the air as the dying fighter's eyes flew open in horror.

"You... you..." he sputtered, voice shaking.

Vetala's voice was ice. "Be my sacrifice."

A dark mist curled off the fallen man's body, swirling into Vetala like a living shadow. The temperature in the arena plummeted, sending an involuntary shiver through the spectators.

Vetala's eyes burned with renewed energy. "I am Vetala Kanchard. Liam and Noah were my students."

His glare locked onto Alex, venom dripping from every syllable. "Were you the one who killed them?"

Alex shrugged, casual to the point of insulting. "They died because they were idiots. You can blame yourself for teaching them such grotesque, worthless techniques."

Vetala's face contorted with pure rage. "I'll tear your soul to shreds! I'll make you beg for death before I'm through!"

Alex's tone stayed maddeningly calm. "Give it your best shot."

"You arrogant little worm!" Vetala spat, dropping into a low stance. The moment

he lunged, the arena floor cracked under the force of his leap—he was blindingly fast, a lethal blur streaking toward Alex.

"Die!" he roared, all of his power coiled into a devastating punch.

The impact was so potent that debris shot across the arena in a wide arc. People cringed, covering their faces, bracing for an earth-shattering collision.

What they saw instead was Alex's hand... rising in slow, almost lazy precision.

SMACK

The sound cracked like a gunshot.

Vetala's body hurtled backward, slamming into the wall with enough force to leave a crater of pulverized stone.

Dust and rubble rained down as Vetala hung half-buried, dazed and limp.

A moment of absolute silence followed.

Chapter 176

"Holy hell..." someone breathed.

Vefala's eyes rolled back, his mouth hanging open in shock. The legendary master had been utterly demolished- with one slap.

Jericho stared, his voice shaking.

"Vetala... lost? Just like that?" He knew the man's strength better than anyone. It was inconceivable that a single blow-no, a single slap-had taken him out.

"I'd say I've won this round," Alex said dismissively, brushing imaginary dust from his hands. He strolled off the arena floor as though this had been a mere inconvenience.

Spectators gawked at him like he was some mythic beast.

No one dared speak.

At last, Jasmine broke the uneasy silence. "Alex, weren't you telling me you barely knew martial arts? Since when does 'barely know' mean you can swat a top-tier fighter like a fly?"

Alex shrugged, deadpan. "He is just too weak."

Jasmine let out a low chuckle, arching a brow. Then she turned to Jericho, her smile turning cold. "We've got three wins to your two losses, Kane. Care to contest that?"

Jericho's jaw tensed, color creeping into his cheeks as he admitted, "I've lost. There's nothing more to say."

"Lovely. We'll be going, then," Jasmine said, sweeping past him with the others in tow. "Do try not to embarrass yourself like this again."

Jericho didn't move, but his eyes followed them, brimming with menace.

Once they'd gone, one of his men growled under his breath, "Sir, are you just letting them walk out? After all that?"

A poisonous sneer curled Jericho's lips. "Let them walk? Of course. But they won't make it past Vermont's borders. I've arranged a little farewell party for them-one they won't survive."

When Jasmine and her people returned to their plane, they were shocked to find a massive hole torn into its side.

The metal was twisted and scorched, wires dangled uselessly, and smoke still lingered in the air.

Someone had completely destroyed the plane's engine.

Jasmine's stomach dropped. "What the hell...?"

One of the bodyguards hesitated before speaking. "Gabriel planted a time bomb on the plane."

A heavy silence fell over the group.

Alex exhaled slowly, his expression unreadable. "Looks like Jericho planned to take us all down."

The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 177[958 words]

Chapter 177

"We'll drive out of Vermont, and once we're past the Vancouver border, Jericho Kane can kiss my ass," Jasmine declared, her voice tight with determination.

Kelly huddled over a map, tapping a spot with her finger. "s about an eight-hour haul from here," she noted. " But once we link up with Lydia's chopper, we're golden."

Jasmine nodded. "She's on standby. As soon as we reach the rendezvous, we'll be in the clear."

Her jaw clenched as she glanced at the winding roads ahead "But first, we've gotta ditch Kane's goons."

They formed a quick plan: three SUVs taking three different routes, each one a decoy to confuse any potential pursuers.

Jasmine, Kelly, Alex, and two bodyguards piled into one of the vehicles.

For a while, they sped down forest-lined roads, winding turns making it feel like the trees were closing in. Just as they approached a fork:

CRASH!

A massive tree slammed down, blocking the road completely. The driver cursed, slamming on the brakes.

Dark shapes materialized from the undergrowth, swarming in seconds.

"Ambush!" one of the bodyguards yelled, already aiming his pistol.

Jasmine's heart lurched, but she gritted her teeth.

"Damn you, Jericho Kane," she spat. "So he wants to play?"

Kelly's expression was ice-calm. "On the battlefield, you either fight or die. No mercy."

Jasmine let out a bitter laugh. "Kane better hope he never ends up under my boot."

From the shadows, a cold, disembodied voice gave a curt command: "Kill them."

Machine guns roared to life, spitting lead.

Bullets hammered into the SUV, pinging off metal with terrifying force.

The bodyguards ducked, but they all knew bulletproof glass wouldn't hold up against that many heavy rounds.

This was the end-

Or so they thought.

The barrage went on and on... yet no bullets tore through the vehicle. "W-What the hell...?" one assassin muttered, reloading with trembling hands. None of the gunfire reached the SUV. Every single bullet seemed to strike an invisible barrier surrounding the car.

The moment the last magazine clicked empty, silence fell.

Hundreds of bullets floated in midair, suspended as if time itself had fractured. Alex coughed once, clearing his throat.

1/3

Chapter 177

In an instant, every slug reversed direction, slicing through the ambushers in a blazing hail.

Horried shrieks rent the air as the assassins were torn apart by their own gunfire. Bodies dropped one by one, blood soaking the ground.

A stunned hush gripped the forest.

Alex stepped out, surveying the carnage as though it were a mild inconvenience. Jasmine exhaled in a rush, snapping back to reality.

"Move it!" she ordered her men. "Clear that damn tree and let's go-fast. Kane's sure to have more tricks up his sleeve, and I'm not hanging around to find out."

They wrestled the fallen trunk aside.

But before they could fully clear the road, two helicopters rumbled overhead, kicking up a mini-sandstorm of dust and leaves.

The choppers touched down, disgorging a squad of heavily-armed operatives in tactical gear.

At the head was Lydia, a striking woman in her thirties.

Her figure was curvy but commanding, an air of danger in every graceful step.

Jasmine's face lit with relief. "Lydia!" she called, rushing over.

The gunmen fanned out, scanning the area. Lydia's gaze landed on the bullet-riddled corpses.

"So much for a quiet exit," she mused, brow furrowing. "Jericho's ambush, I presume?"

"He knew exactly where to wait," Jasmine replied. "Which makes no damn sense- we planned three separate routes, and only our inner circle knew which road we were on."

Lydia's expression darkened. "A mole, then. Someone leaked your route."

Jasmine's blood ran cold. "Impossible—unless....." She frowned, trying to think of anyone who might have sold

them out.

Suddenly, two of Lydia's men lunged forward, blades glinting in the light. Cold steel pressed against Alex's throat.

"What the-?!" Jasmine snarled, about to shove them off him.

Lydia raised a dismissive hand, her voice dripping with suspicion. "He's the new face here, the only one I don't trust. He's obviously the mole."

"This is insane!" Jasmine snapped, fury lacing every word. "You have zero proof, Lydia. Let him go!"

"I am your head security and I'm protecting the Kingston family," Lydia shot back. "And I'll kill any stray dog who threatens us."

"Stray dog?" Jasmine repeated with a snarl. "He saved our lives back there. Why would Jericho's men try to blow him away if he was working for them?"

Lydia's features remained stony. "Maybe it was a setup-spies pull that sort of stunt all the time. Earn trust by faking a close call. I'm not taking chances."

2/3

Chapter 177

She lifted her chin. "Kneel, or die."

The henchmen's knives bit closer to Alex's skin. A lethal hush fell over the

Alex let out a low, humorless chuckle. "This is how you want it?"

"Kneel," Lydia repeated, her eyes cold. "Now."

With a soft sigh, Alex moved. Faster than blinking, he vanished in a blur.

Metal screeched as both knives shattered.

Clearing.

Lydia's men tumbled to the ground, clutching shattered wrists, knives split in two beside them.

A collective gasp tore through the soldiers. Lydia herself blinked, momentarily thrown off-guard by Alex's raw speed.

He straightened his jacket, flicking dust from his sleeve.

"I warned you," he muttered, voice like ice.

"Enough!" Jasmine snapped, stepping in front of him. "If there's a traitor, fine, let's find them. But it's not Alex. Get a grip, Lydia."

Lydia's jaw clenched, every muscle in her neck tight. "You're really going to fight me over him?"

Jasmine's gaze was unwavering. "Try me."

For a heartbeat, they locked eyes, tension crackling like static in the air. Then Lydia's lips curled into a cold smile.

"You leave me no choice," she said quietly. "I'll explain everything to your father later. For now, I make the calls."

A single, imperious gesture-"Take Alex down. Kill him if you have to."

Her soldiers hesitated, but stepped forward, weapons raised, forming a tightening circle.

The order was clear: Alex wasn't leaving that clearing alive unless he fought his way out. 2

And from the look in Lydia's eyes, she'd be more than happy to see him try.

Today's Bonus Offer

GET IT NOW

The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 178[1,134 words]

3/3

Chapter 178

Chapter 178

Two of Lydia's soldiers lunged at Alex in a synchronized move, each trying to knock him off balance with a "forceful kick aimed at his knee.

The blows landed, but Alex didn't budge an inch.

It felt, to them, like their legs had just collided with a slab of solid iron.

One soldier let out a strangled cry as he crumpled to the ground, clutching his shattered shin.

The other toppled over next to him, howling in agony.

"Y-you monster!" another soldier snarled, leveling his weapon at Alex's head. Several more followed suit, forming a ring of gun barrels pointed straight at him. Suddenly, one of the men who'd been aiming at Alex turned his rifle away from its target.

Without warning, he pulled the trigger-twice-blowing the heads off two of his own comrades in a grisly, explosive spray.

"What the hell just happened?" someone shouted, horror-stricken.

"I-I don't know!" cried the shooter, eyes wide with panic. "My hand... it moved on its own!"

"Drop that damn gun!" barked another soldier, voice trembling.

The moment the shooter tossed his rifle aside, he yanked a hunting knife from his belt and lunged at the nearest comrade, stabbing viciously.

"Stop!" the comrades yelled.

One soldier fired his pistol in desperation, the bullet ripping through the assailant's chest.

The attacker collapsed, but in a grotesque twist, his body kept moving-like a mindless puppet-driving the blade deeper into the soldier he'd tackled.

"Shoot him again!" someone else screamed, voice shrill with terror. "He's not going down!"

Several rifles went off at once. Bullets tore into the attackers torso until he finally slumped over, lifeless.

While the soldiers reeled from this nightmarish scene, Alex stood with a faint, chilling smile curving at the corner

of his mouth.

Unbeknownst to them, he held complete control over everyone within fifty meters with his internal energy-like an unseen puppeteer tugging at strings.

In the midst of the carnage, Lydia, the head of security for the Kingston family, stared at the killing with shock etched across her features.

She'd never seen anything like this before.

Her entire squad-trusted, trained soldiers-were turning on each other, and most had been slaughtered in more

moments.

A solitary soldier-turned-puppet, riddled with bullets but still twitching, staggered in front of Lydia.

1/3

Chapter 178

Half its head was blown off, yet it charged forward with a blade raised.

"Back off!" Lydia shouted, emptying her entire magazine to the ghastly figure.

Ten bullets tore through what little remained of its skull. I stumbled, yet somehow kept going, letting out at guttural groan as it thrust the blade at her.

"You bastard!" Lydia roared, finally drawing the gleaming sword strapped to her waist.

A single, lightning-fast slash severed the puppet's arms; another cut took both legs at the knees.

The corpse collapsed in a broken heap, quivering one last time before going still. Lydia stood panting, surrounded by the fallen.

Her own people-her squad, once the pride of the Kingston family-lay dead. Her chest rose and fell with ragged breaths, fury blazing in her eyes.

"You have to die," she snarled at Alex.

Lydia rushed him, sword raised high.

With a calm expression, Alex sidestepped her blade at the last second and slammed his fist into her abdomen

The force sent Lydia hurtling backward until she crashed into a tree trunk with a sickening thud.

Despite her cracked ribs and the agony coursing through her body, Lydia refused to submit. She tried to stand, only to have Alex blur forward and clamp a hand around her throat, lifting her clean off the ground.

Lydia choked, feet dangling uselessly. She could feel her life slipping away as her lungs burned for air.

"Alex, stop! Please, let her go-she's my family!" Jasmine Kingston cried, voice stricken with desperation.

Kelly, her face ashen, echoed the plea. "If you kill Lydia, there'll be hell to pay! The Winston family doesn't let things like this slide!"

But Lydia just managed a contemptuous glare. "Go on, do it," she rasped, spitting blood. "But you'll die too. The entire Winston family will hunt you down."

"Really?" Alex said, his voice low and mocking. "So you think you can try to kill me, but I'm not allowed to kill you?"

"You're committing suicide if you murder me!" she hissed, clinging to the last vestiges of her pride.

Alex's lips curled in a cold smile. "Then let's find out."

He tightened his grip. Lydia's eyes bulged, her struggles weakening.

A moment later, her neck gave a sickening crack. Her body went limp, then dropped in a boneless heap onto the ground.

Silence.

Every surviving guard seemed rooted in place, jaws slack, minds barely processing the horror of Lydia's death.

"Holy... Lydia... He really killed her!" one guard finally gasped, eyes wide as if he'd seen a demon.

"You're insane!" another guard shouted at Alex. "You've no idea what you've done!"

2/3

Chapter 178

Alex rolled his shoulders, as if shaking off an inconvenience "She went straight for my throat. If I'd let her kill

that'd be real stupidity I don't do that."

me

"You-"The guard's voice faltered, unable to formulate a reply.

Alex turned toward Jasmine, ignoring the furious stares. "Jasmine, I take it you're not surprised your mother's family made a move like this. Care to explain?"

Jasmine exchanged a look with Kelly, then let out a weary sigh.

"My mother's from Detroit, part of the Winston family-well-known for their weapons manufacturing and security contracts. They never liked my father because he refused to give them a stake in Vancouver State. They've held a grudge ever since."

"Ironically, despite their resentment, my father still hires them to handle security and supply the guards-after all, they're the best in the country."

She drew in a breath and squared her shoulders, trying to maintain her composure.

"Charles-my brother-must have promised them something. Maybe Jericho Kane is also pulling strings. I suspect Lydia was a mole, feeding them our travel route and coordinating this ambush."

Kelly's eyes flickered with realization. "That's why she started barking orders the second she arrived... She was never here to protect us; she was setting a trap." "But how could she betray the Kingstons?" another guard burst out, shock still evident in her voice. "She was our head of security!"

Jasmine's lips tightened into a thin line. "Money. Power. People do awful things for both."

She shivered at the thought of what might have happened if Alex hadn't been so formidable.

"We have to warn my father. If Lydia was compromised, there could be others. A snake inside the house is deadlier than a lion outside.. One leak, one betrayal, and the entire Kingston family could crumble from within."

Kelly looked unsettled, glancing at the wreckage of bodies on the ground. "So what's our move?"

Jasmine inhaled shakily, swallowing the dread tightening her throat.

"We head back. We tell my father everything. He must know that my mother's family is now aiding Charles."

"And Jericho Kane isn't a fool-he'll keep stoking the fire of our internal conflict

until we tear ourselves apart. Then, when there's nothing left but ruins, he'll swoop in and claim it all."

"His greatest victory will be making us destroy ourselves."

Chapter 179

The Almighty Dominance kidnapped 179[931 words]

Chapter 179

Insle, Kelly sat on one side, her jaw clenched so hard it was a wonder her teeth didn't crack.

"They're traitors, Jasmine," Kelly hissed, eyes burning. "Dirty, backstabbing traitors. And you know what we do with traitors?"

"We crush them. We make them regret the day they decided to cross us."

Jasmine pressed two fingers against her temple, trying to will away the headache that pounded behind her eyes.

She'd had enough chaos for one day.

"I get it, Kelly," she said in a low voice. "But we need a real plan."

Kelly's eyes flickered with frustration.

"You want a plan? How about we start by tossing every piece of human trash that came out of Detroit or Winston? You heard that bastard Charles-he's still got connections everywhere."

A muscle in Jasmine's cheek twitched.

If only she'd been more ruthless, if only she'd shut the door on Charles for good.

But regrets wouldn't keep them safe now.

"Jasmine, Hesitation is the enemy of power. Strike first, or be struck down."

"You know we can't just massacre people," Jasmine muttered. "There has to be some line we won't cross."

"Listen Jasmine, a ruler must choose: to be feared or to be betrayed. There is no third path."

Across the aisle, Alex observed quietly. "Jasmine... your bodyguards. How well do you trust them?"

Jasmine replied. "I trust them with my life. They've been with me for ten years." "Where are they from?"

The question hit Jasmine like a punch to the gut.

"Detroit," she said, heart pounding.

Something about Alex's question twisted her stomach into knots. "You're not suggesting-"

But before she could finish, Alex's head whipped toward the front of the helicopter.

oo

The two pilots exchanged a look-then, in a flash, they kicked the doors wide open and bailed out with parachutes.

"What the hell!" Kelly shouted, scrabbling forward.

She watched in shock as the helicopter continued on autopilot, no one at the controls.

Then the low rumble of rotors surrounded them, growing louder by the second.

Four military choppers appeared on the horizon, slicing through the clouds like predatory hawks.

Kelly spotted the missiles first.

"Missiles!" she screamed. "They're launching!"

1/3

Chapter 179

Twelve rockets tore through the sky, contrails scorching the air as they zeroed in on the lone helicopter.

Without wasting a second, Alex lunged into the center of the cabin.

He pulled Jasmine and Kelly close, securing them in each powerful arm as if shielding them.

An invisible barrier flickered into existence, wrapping around the three of them like a bubble of condensed air.

Almost at once, the first missile slammed into the helicopter's frame.

BOOM!

The explosion rocked them so violently Jasmine's head snapped back, and everything went white for an instant.

Alex grunted, his energy shield sparking under the pressure. His entire body shuddered.

BOOM! BOOM!

Another barrage struck.

The cockpit disintegrated in a wave of flames, the shockwave nearly crushing Alex's protective shield.

Sweat beaded along his hairline; he could feel his bones creaking under the strain.

It was like trying to hold off a charging freight train with nothing but willpower.

Kelly let out a strangled cry as unconsciousness seized her.

Her body limp in Alex's arm.

The entire helicopter shattered into pieces, leaving only Alex and everyone else suspended in midair.

But Alex couldn't give up. Steeling himself, he forced the shield to expand outward.

With a guttural roar, he redirected two incoming missiles turned them right back at their sources.

One, then another, exploded against the pursuing helicopters, sending flaming wreckage spiraling from the sky.

Smoke and shrapnel filled the air. Two choppers down.

Two still alive.

Alex's heart thundered in his chest.

His vision blurred with the toll on his body, but he summoned the last vestige of his strength.

Another pair of missiles arced in.

He ripped them sideways with his energy, hurling them into the final helicopters in a storm of metal and fire.

A deafening bang shattered the sky as the remaining choppers erupted into blinding fireballs.

The sky was a bruised shade of blue, streaked with dying sunlight as Alex struggled through the air.

Kelly and Jasmine sagged against him on either side, unconscious and limp, their bodies draped across his arms like lifeless dolls.

Alex's breath came in ragged gulps.

Every muscle felt like it had been hammered raw.

2/3

Chapter 179

He was just a speck crossing from Vermont's airspace into Vancouver skies, the promise of Vancouver growing more distant by the second.

"Blood trickled from the corner of his mouth, painting a dark red line down his chin.

Each breath stabbed at his chest like broken glass.

"Come on," he rasped, his voice little more than a ghost of sound. "Just... hold on."

His reserves of energy-whatever mysterious well he'd been drawing from-were nearly tapped out.

The wind whistled past his ears, mocking his desperation.

Everything in his body screamed for him to give in.

But Kelly and Jasmine were depending on him.

Despite his faltering lungs, despite the mind-numbing pain radiating from his shattered bones, he pressed forward.

Then it happened-a dreadful lurch.

His knees buckled in midair, altitude hemorrhaging in a sickening drop.

The black edges of unconsciousness crept over his vision, strangling out the light.

"Not... yet..." he snarled to no one, fighting the darkness.

A final surge of willpower let him angle his descent toward an empty stretch of road below.

The impact came like a thunderclap.

CRASH!

Alex tried to absorb the landing with his legs.

He staggered forward a few hopeless steps, his teeth clenched so hard it felt like they'd shatter.

Kelly and Jasmine tumbled from his grasp, his arms too weak to hold them any longer. The asphalt scraped painfully against his flesh.

He hit the ground with a bone-jarring slam. A strangled groan ripped from his throat as the world spun wildly, then went dim. Pain obliterated thought.

Darkness swallowed him whole.

When the dust settled, the three of them lay sprawled across the cracked asphalt-Alex, Kelly, and Jasmine, all unconscious and broken, silhouettes against

a road that stretched on into nowhere.

Today's Bonus Offer

GET IT NOW

3/3

The Almighty Dominance - kidnapped 180[1,356 words]

Chapter 180

After countless hours of darkness, Alex's eyes finally fluttered open.

A dull ache pulsed through his entire body.

"Alex, you're awake?"

The relief in Kelly's voice practically echoed off the sterile Hospital walls.

Her eyes were brimming with unshed tears, and before he knew what was happening, she latched onto him in a fierce hug.

"You had me scared half to death," she whispered, voice trembling. "Don't ever pull something like that again."

Alex gave a weak chuckle, trying to shift into a more comfortable position.

"I'm fine, Kelly. Quit looking at me like I'm about to keel over any second. Where... where am I?"

Before Kelly could respond, the door swung open with a loud click.

Jasmine glided in, followed by Lyra, each looking polished and stunning in their own right.

"Alex!" Jasmine exclaimed, her tone tinged with urgency. She rushed to his bedside. "Thank God you're alright. We were worried."

Alex offered her a faint smile. "Little banged up, but I'll live."

Jasmine's gaze flickered to Kelly, who was still clinging to Alex like a lifeline.

"Ahem,"

Jasmine began, not even attempting to hide the edge in her voice. "Kelly, don't you think you've squeezed the life out of him enough? He's injured, not a teddy bear."

"Exactly," Lyra chimed in, crossing her arms. "He needs rest. Preferably without someone suffocating him."

Their words immediately elevated the tension in the room-like striking a match near a powder keg.

Kelly whipped her head around, shooting daggers at Lyra. "You got a problem with the way I take care of him?"

"Take care of him? Honey, you're practically crushing him," Lyra retorted, arching a perfectly shaped brow.

A hostile silence stretched thin and taut between the three women.

Jealous sparks ignited in the air, crackling with a challenge that Alex could practically feel rippling across his skin.

Then, in the worst possible timing, the door opened again revealing the hospital doctor.

He took one look at the trio glaring at each other over Alex's wounded body and faltered, clearing his throat. "Um, ladies, if I could just-"

"Don't," Jasmine, Kelly, and Lyra snapped in perfect unison.

The poor man blinked, face reddening.

"Right. I'll just, uh..." He backed out of the room with a sigh that could only be described as envi

"Great," Kelly muttered, rolling her eyes, "we just chased out our doctor. That's gotta be some kind of record."

1/4

Chapter 18o

Lyra snorted. "Well, that's on you."

Jasine ignored their bickering, focusing again on Alex.

She stepped closer, producing a small white bottle and a glass of warm water. "Alex, take this. It's a top-secret medicine I tracked down just for you. Cost me a fortune—don't ask how I got it. But trust me, one pill and you'll be on your feet in no time."

Alex's eyebrows shot up at her serious tone. "Secret medicine, huh?"

"Don't scoff," Jasmine warned, her eyes flashing.

"They say it was made by a five-hundred-year-old sage. According to Lyra, she basically has to sell her soul to get this pill. I went through hell-money, connections-you name it. So just take it."

At this, Alex glanced at Lyra, who was blushing furiously.

The so-called "miracle pill" Jasmine spoke of was his own creation-one he had entrusted to Lyra long ago for distribution.

Now it was sudd nly the product of an ancient sorcerer's craft, complete with soul-selling conditions?

He forced his expression to remain blank, hoping he wouldn't burst out laughing. Jasmine's eyes narrowed when she saw his amused look.

"What? You know something?"

Lyra chose that exact moment to clear her throat-loudly. "Miss Kingston, I just remembered I have...some urgent business. You know, top-secret stuff. Alex is awake, so my job here is done."

In a flash, Lyra was gone, leaving the door swaying behind her.

Jasmine stared after her, confusion etched into her features

"What the heck's her problem?" She shook her head and pressed the pill bottle

into Alex's hand. "Anyway, take it. I'm not asking."

He tried to wave her off. "Honestly, I'm already feeling better. No need to waste your fancy miracle pill."

Jasmine's lips thinned. "Don't make me repeat myself."

She shoved the bottle into his pocket, effectively ending the argument. Alex sighed. She meant well, so he let it go.

Suddenly, Jasmine perked up as if recalling something. "Oh-by the way, I almost forgot. I spotted Sophia Lancaster downstairs in the ER. It looked serious. Her grandfather was brought in, and I heard he's in critical condition."

Alex's face went grim. "Sophia? Are you sure?"

Jasmine shrugged. "She was a wreck, so yes, I'm pretty sure. Her grandfather's not looking good."

Alex swung his legs off the bed, ignoring his body's protests.

"I'm going to see him. Abraham Lancaster always treated me like family. I'm not about to sit here dying."

le he's

Kelly opened her mouth to argue, but she recognized the steely look in his eyes and held back, giving a short nod.

Chapter 180

Meanwhile, in another wing of the hospital, chaos brewed in a private room.

Sophia Lancaster paced frantically by her grandfather's bedside, her heels clacking against the tile like an agitated heartbeat.

Abraham Lancaster lay motionless, his usually robust face ghostly pale. Family members hovered around, restless and frightened, with hushed voices swirling through the af

"How could this happen?" one cousin murmured. "He was so vigorous just yesterday."

"It's like something attacked him from the inside," another relative whispered." Florence stood off to the side, arms folded protectively.

"The doctors can't figure it out," she said softly, sympathy flickering in her eyes. "They say it's bizarre, like nothing they've seen."

Sophia practically snarled in frustration. "Then find someone who can figure it out!

I don't care if we have to fly in every specialist on the planet!"

A single voice, smooth and confident, broke through the tension. "I might have a solution."

Heads turned to see Charles stepping forward, hands tucked casually in his pockets. "I know a brilliant physician -Dr. Vincent Foster from Detroit. He's the apprentice of Dr. Jonathan Owens."

A current of recognition buzzed among the Lancasters. Dr. Owens was legendary. Even in Vancouver, his reputation was second to none. If his apprentice was half as skilled, there might be hope for the old man yet.

"Can you get him?" Sophia demanded, eyes shining with desperation.

Charles offered an oily smile. "He's a friend of mine. He'll come if I ask."

The entire family breathed a collective sigh of relief. "Thank you, Charles," someone said. "If you save Old Mr. Lancaster, we'll be forever in your debt." Wasting no time, Charles excused himself to make the call. As he stepped into the corridor, he nearly collided with Jasmine and Alex right behind her.

"Oh!" Charles wore a too-sweet smile that made Alex's stomach churn.

"Heard you were hospitalized, Alex. Thought I'd drop by and see how you were doing-but look at you, already up and about. You must have the luck of the devil." Jasmine took an intimidating step forward, every syllable clipped with cold fury. "Luck? Is that what you call it, Charles?" Her voice dripped with accusation. "Because from where I'm standing, it looks a lot like you tried to kill me—and betray the Kingstons in the process."

Charles feigned a wounded expression, hand splayed dramatically over his chest. "Betray you? My dear sister, I'd never. You know how fond I am of our precious family."

Her eyes narrowed into slits, and a palpable rage radiated from her.

"Cut the crap. I know you're behind this, Charles, so don't bother denying it. If you think you can just slither your way back after stabbing us in the back, you're dead wrong."

3/4

Chapter 180

Charles's polished grin twitched. "Ouch, you are hurting my feeling. I'm sure we can straighten out this little misunderstanding," he said, voice dripping with smug assurance.

After all, I'm not a monster. My dear little sister."

Jasmine's cold laugh cut through the hallway like a blade. Keep telling yourself that, Charles. Maybe if you repeat it often enough, you'll start to believe it."

Even so, fury coiled beneath her cool exterior.

She longed to crush Charles for every lie, every betrayal he had woven around her.

Part of her wanted to drag him into the same black pit he'd tried to shove her into—make him choke on the very filth he'd inflicted on everyone else.

But if she stooped to his level, would there be anything left of herself worth saving?

One look at Charles's smirking face sent her pulse hammering.

She who fights monsters must take care not to become one herself. 2)