

Love Slave 55

55 Harsh Gossip and Moving On

Maybe it was because of Ace's unexpected visit to my apartment that made me forget all about Kyle and his wedding that weekend. After Ace left, I ended up chewing on one of the doughnuts that he bought while continuing with my research on the topic of dog meat trade. By the end of the day, I had compiled a very good list of resources regarding the facts about the trade as well as many angles of the public's opinion of it.

Although I wasn't sure if Ace did that intentionally or not, but his visit did provide enough distraction for me to stop thinking about Kyle and his betrayal. After spending the whole of Sunday submerging myself in my research, I had completely come to terms with Kyle moving on and realized that I should be doing the same. Kyle probably didn't need my well wishes but I decided to wish him the best with his new phase in life with his wife.

That night I slept deeply and without dreams as I prepared myself for some grueling work on Monday. Kyle had clearly moved on and although I haven't made any real progress in my love life, I was determined to get a move on with my professional career. I'm going to show everyone what I can do on this project.

Monday arrived and soon after I stepped into the lobby of the office building, I quickly found that Ace's unintentional efforts in diverting my attention from Kyle's wedding didn't truly work. Despite the many great things that I admired about this company, there were some cultural things that truly got on my nerves. One of those things was the exceptional talent of many employees of this company in gossiping about everything especially their colleagues.

"You know that Kyle from Planning got married the past weekend, right?"

"Of course. I stalked all social media channels just to get a glimpse at some photos from his wedding..."

"I heard his bride is a real beauty. I bet her family is rich,"

"Kyle's family is well-off too. They're probably a match made in heaven,"

"Look at this photo here! I got my friend from the planning department to send it over. He was there at the wedding,"

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I never realized until we broke up that Kyle was such a celebrity figure in our office. Perhaps, I did realize it, but I just ignored it while thinking that it was nothing but a burden to our secret relationship. The more that people paid attention to Kyle and the more that they swarmed around him, the more we had to be careful to keep our relationship hidden. I sighed and closed my eyes momentarily to calm my muddled mind.

There's nothing for you to hide anymore, Karina. Well, perhaps the fact that you had a one-night stand with the Devil CEO...

Just imagine if that were to get out.

I stepped into the elevator while I prayed that I wouldn't run into Kyle. One of these days, I'm going to be completely fine about running into him and facing him; however, that day wasn't going to be today. I moved deeper inside the elevator as more people came in while trying to make myself as small as possible. Despite my efforts to keep Kyle and his wedding off my mind, I kept on thinking of the reason why he had to lie to me.

How much of our relationship was a lie? Was everything simply just a lie?

All those times when he was kind to me. All those times that he supported me when I was going through a hard time whether in life or at work. Was everything just lies?

When he held me and told me that he loved me. Was that just a convenient lie that he told just so that he could use me and sleep with me?

He's so popular, though. Wouldn't it be easier for him to grab one-night stand lovers with the other girls?

Just like always, by the time that the elevator arrived at the CEO's floor, I was the only one left standing all alone and extremely confused in the elevator. The sound of the elevator's arrival and the door sliding open snapped me out of my dark thoughts along with a sting of a headache.

Enough of this, Karina.

There's so much work for you to do and you're going to have to do extremely well to earn and keep your place on this team of crazy genius A-listers!

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"Start..." Ace said dispassionately from his seat at the head of the meeting table.

This is it. I stood in front of the large projector screen with everyone's eyes on me as I was about to deliver my first ever presentation as a member of the CEO's office. After wrecking my brain and sacrificing sleep over the weekend, my presentation was ready...hopefully.

"Hello everyone. In my presentation, I will provide some contextual information on the dog meat trade as well as highlight some common public opinions of the trade. First of all, what exactly is the dog meat trade and how does it work?" I began my presentation while trying my best to keep my voice from shaking from my nervousness.

I haven't worked for that long but over the years that I've been at Jesses and Hill's, I've had the opportunity to present in various business meetings and also in front of clients. However, the tension and pressure of this meeting was on an entirely different level all together and it was just an internal meeting without external stakeholders involved. I didn't dare think of how stressful this project would be at the pitching stage and when the clients got involved.

My past experiences and learning saved me, and I was somehow able to push to the end of my presentation while maintaining the attention and focus of my audiences. I thanked Lauren and her training and guidance silently in my head when my presentation came to a close. There was a brief moment of silence as everyone seemed to absorb in the information.

Suddenly, a hand shot up into the air.

