

## **An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 531 -**

### Chapter 531

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"H-how could you pull the trigger on me?" Jacob cried, outraged. He never expected Natasha to be the type to do something like that to her elder. If the bullet's trajectory had been slightly off the mark, he would've lost his foot!

"You better not mess around, Uncle Jacob." Natasha threatened frostily.

"How dare you!" Trent roared. "Natasha Harmon, he is your uncle! You'd be disgracing our family if you had hurt him just now!"

"I don't want to hurt anyone, so you better not force me to," Natasha responded unrelentingly.

"Y-you bastard! Do you intend to betray your family for that boy?" Trent was furious.

The Harmon family had always lived by a rule-nothing mattered more than the family's interests, which meant that they could sacrifice anyone if it meant saving their family. Therefore, Natasha's contradictory actions were seen as a sign of disloyalty.

"All I care about right now is protecting Dustin." Natasha stood her ground.

"How many bullets do you have, Natasha? Do you even have enough to kill all of us?" Kate taunted.

"You can try." Natasha abruptly turned the gun toward Kate, making the latter pale and hide behind her father, worried that Natasha might actually do something outrageous and reckless

out of love.

"Are you out of your mind, Natasha? We are your family!" Jessica could no longer remain silent. She was worried her daughter might impulsively hurt someone, making her the family's enemy.

When Natasha didn't respond, Jessica turned to Dustin and snapped. "Dustin, are you going to drag my daughter into the mess you created?"

"Natasha, put the gun down." Dustin reached out and pressed the gun downward to lower it, before turning to face the rest of the people. "I was the one who killed Layla, so the Grants will naturally look for me if they want revenge. Why are all of you so worked up?"

"Hmph! As if things are that simple. Who knows whether you'll drag our family down with you?" Kate snorted.

"I'm not even close to your family, so why would I drag you down with me?" Dustin answered nonchalantly. "You guys being afraid of the Grants is none of my business, but if you're trying to capture me to get in their good graces, I'm afraid that's impossible."

for Bustin, all of you would have died during the family gathering! It's bad enough that you aren't helping him in times of need, but how could you guys add fuel to the fire instead?" Her words silenced the arrogant people.

"Forget about those righteous views of yours, Natasha. One must pay for their crimes. Dustin made a mistake, so he should be punished!" Kate sneered.

"She's right. We don't want to suffer just because of him!" The crowd echoed.

They couldn't care less about Dustin's previous contributions and were willing to sacrifice him if it meant placating the Grants.

"A-are you guys going against me?" Natasha demanded agitatedly.

"Enough with the nonsense. For the sake of our family, we must arrest him today!" Jacob incited. "Give the command, Trent!"

"Don't hate me, Dustin. You have yourself to blame for making such a huge mistake." Trent gestured to the others and commanded. "Tie him up!"

"I'd like to see who dares!" Suddenly, Natasha fished out a gun from the bedside and pointed it toward the group of people.

"You wretch! Are you trying to rebel against us?" Trent yelled.

"Don't force my hand, Uncle Trent!" Natasha warned.

“Well, I don’t believe you have the guts to shoot us!”

Jacob began to step forward confidently, and without hesitation, Natasha pulled the trigger.

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"Nice speech, but what makes you think you have a say in this?" Jacob sneered. "Why not? I've always made the choices for my own life." Dustin responded.

"This is our territory! We decide your fate!" Jacob declared haughtily.

"I don't want to fight, but I'll have no choice if you continue to provoke me," Dustin warned.

"You sure are a stubborn one. Let's see how strong you are!" Jacob drew his blade and swung it toward Dustin.

"Stop!"

Out of the blue, a solemn voice boomed. Slowly, a white-haired elderly man strode in with the aid of a walking cane.

"Father?"

"Grandfather?"

Everyone was visibly taken aback to see the old man, who had stepped back from the limelight eight years ago and no longer concerned himself with family affairs. They were puzzled as to why he was there.

"What are you doing here, Father?" Trent welcomed his father hurriedly.

Jacob stopped mid-attack and stood to the side respectfully as well.

“You guys would have destroyed this place if I hadn’t come!” Andrew humphed.

“Father, we still have some things to take care of. Why don’t you go back to your room and rest if you’re feeling unwell?”

Trent reached out to help but Andrew swatted his son’s hand away. “Are you trying to say that an old coot like me has no right to interfere with family affairs anymore?”

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“Of course not, Father. You will always be the head of the family.” Trent smiled sheepishly.

“Fine. Since you said that, I’ll give you my opinion.” Andrew surveyed the room. “Dustin has saved my life, as well as helped our family multiple times. We are in his debt, so anyone who tries to take him today will be going against me!”

“What?”

The group shared dismayed glances. They never expected Andrew to stand up for Dustin during this crucial time.

“Father, this bastard killed one of the Grants’ daughters! He will only drag us deeper into this mess!” Trent rebutted.

“Trent is right! We’re doing this for the greater good of the family!” Jacob seconded.

“You bunch say such lofty things when you’re just cowards!” Andrew struck the floor with his cane forcefully. “The Grants have been stepping all over us, and instead of standing up against them, you choose to grovel and please them? What an embarrassment to our family!”

“Fath-”

“Silence!” Andrew cut off Trent’s words. “Our family has gone through all sorts of trials since its existence. How could we embarrass our ancestors by losing our dignity because of something like this?”

The Harmons lowered their heads in shame, unable to deny that the Grants had shaken them greatly.

“Listen carefully!” Andrew announced. “Our priority should be to save Hector, and not be sitting ducks!”

He made Hector his successor because of how righteous and brave his son was, but now that Hector was captured, the entire family was thrown into chaos.

“Grandfather, we need to borrow the Grants’ power if we want to save Uncle Hector. Our best option is to hand Dustin over to them in exchange for Uncle Trent.” Kate coaxed.

“Nonsense!” Andrew glared at his granddaughter. “The Grants were the ones who framed and imprisoned your uncle, yet you think they’ll help us? What a joke!”

“What? Mr. Hector was imprisoned by the Grants?”

The crowd was dismayed to hear this. After all, framing the head of another family was not a small matter.

“Father, please refrain from making claims without evidence! There are ears everywhere.” Trent reminded seriously.

“Evidence, you say? Sure!” Andrew turned around and called out. “Isfrid? Bring him in.”



Immediately, the leader of the shadow guards dragged a man into the room. The man wore a hood that made it difficult to identify his face and was tightly bound from head to toe.

“See this man? He’s the real murderer!” Andrew yanked off the man’s hood, exposing a familiar face.

It was Hector’s face!

“Mr. Hector?”

Everyone was puzzled by the sight. Hadn’t Hector been captured? What was he doing here?

“Yeah, right. He’s merely wearing a prosthetic mask!”

Andrew sank his fingers into the man’s face and pulled, revealing skin with a sickly pallor.

“I-it’s fake?” The crowd exclaimed, stunned. They never imagined that something like this existed in real life, and it was shockingly realistic too! It was so well made that it nearly fooled

everyone.

“Do all of you understand now? Hector was framed, and the ones behind this are the Grants! Are you still going to suck up to those treacherous bastards?” Andrew seethed, rendering everyone else silent.

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The Harmon family had placed their hope in the Grant family’s help before knowing the truth, but now, they finally understood that running away in fear was useless. If the Grants were willing to go as far as to frame the leader of the Harmon family, there was no way they would care about Hector’s survival.

“What? Cat got your tongue? Remember to use your head next time!” Andrew reprimanded them before turning to look at Dustin. “Dustin, I’m so sorry you had to suffer because I didn’t educate them properly.”

“Not at all, Sir Andrew. Thank you for defending me in time.” Dustin smiled in gratitude.

Although the Harmon family had a few ungrateful individuals, there were still people who were reasonable and just.

“I feel so ashamed... I don’t know what would have happened to our family if you hadn’t helped us catch the real murderer.” Andrew sighed.

Their family prided itself on being a powerful family with countless elites. Yet, when something happened to their leader, it was a young outsider who saved the day.

“Father, it was our shadow guards who caught the killer. What does it have to do with that brat?” Jacob mumbled in displeasure.

“You fool!” Andrew snapped. “If Dustin hadn’t used himself as bait to expose the killer’s whereabouts, do you think that the shadow guards could have captured that man?”

“What? Dustin caught the culprit?” The crowd was astonished to hear that.

“Dustin helped us so much, yet all of you wanted to harm him instead! What a bunch of ungrateful bastards!” Andrew’s blood boiled. “All of you here shall kneel before our ancestral altar and repent your actions!”

Hearing this, the group of people scuttled away dejectedly, letting the room quiet down once

more.

“Thank you for coming, Grandfather, or things would have escalated.” Natasha let out a breath of relief. She had been worried about being caught between a rock and a hard place if the two parties began fighting.

“An old man like me might not be much use anymore, but I can still take care of those brats easily.” Andrew flashed a comforting grin. He had just displayed what it meant to be the head of a patriarchal family.

“Grandfather, how should we deal with this man?” Natasha turned her attention to the

murderer.

“Since we’ve caught the real killer, we must restore your father’s innocence,” Andrew stated

earnestly. “I’ll take a few men with me to visit Sir Moran and explain things to him immediately.”

“Thank you so much, Grandfather.” Natasha nodded.

“Silly girl. There’s no need to thank me. I’ll be off now.” Andrew smiled before leaving with

his men.

“Get some rest, Natasha. I’ll visit you again tomorrow.” Dustin also bid her farewell.

“Can’t you stay with me?” Natasha pleaded, reluctant to be alone.

“I can’t. I’m currently the Grants’ wanted criminal. However, I’ll be coming over to reapply your wound dressing tomorrow.” Dustin consoled her.

“Alright, then. Be careful.” Natasha didn’t press.

“Goodnight.” Dustin smiled and left the room. He was secretly followed by two people, hidden in the darkness.

The night quickly flew by. Early in the next morning, a military vehicle slowly rolled up to the entrance of the Harmon estate.

When the car door opened, a haggard-looking Hector emerged.

“Mr. Hector? He’s back!” The guards at the entrance lit up upon seeing Hector and dashed in to spread the word.

Soon, Natasha and the others came rushing out to greet the man.

“Dad, you’re back! How are you feeling? Are you hurt anywhere?” Natasha fussed over Hector, surprised to see him.

“I’m fine. Sir Moran let me out as soon as they realized that I had been framed,” Hector answered, smiling.

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The previous night had been a nightmare. Fortunately, the truth was out, and nothing much happened to him.

Suddenly, Hector noticed something, and his smile stiffened. "Natasha, your face..."

"It's just a minor injury," Natasha replied indifferently.

"What happened?" Hector frowned.

"A lot of things happened while you were gone, Hector." Jesicca calmly briefed him on what happened.

Hector was livid. "The Grants again? They're crossing the line!"

It was bad enough that they set him up, but they have even hurt his daughter? That was unacceptable!

"Don't worry, Dad. I'm fine now." Natasha consoled.

"It's my fault, Natasha. You suffered because I was useless." Hector blamed himself. If he had known how despicable the Grants were, he would have never agreed to the marriage proposal.

"Nonsense, Dad. We're lucky just to have you back. Let's talk more inside." Smiling, Natasha took her father's arm and walked into the estate.

Just as they arrived at the meeting room, their butler rushed into the room. "Sir, the Grants just sent us a letter. Please have a look." The butler held up an envelope and passed it to Hector politely.

"What?" Hector's expression darkened after reading the letter.

"What's wrong, Dad?" Natasha leaned closer and soon frowned.

The letter only consisted of a few words, but they couldn't be more threatening. To sum things up,

the Grants were blaming the Harmon family for Layla Grant's death, and they claimed that Dustin was the one who ordered the Harmon family to do so.

Now, the Harmon family had two choices. The first was to hand the culprit over and grovel for forgiveness for three days. The second was to carry out the wedding as planned.

They could only choose one of the two choices. If they refused, the Grants would come at them in full force, wreaking havoc.

"It seems like Tyler intends to use his sister's death as an excuse to force me to marry him." Natasha frowned, surprised. She thought the Grants would use other backhanded methods, so she didn't expect them to be so forward.

The Harmon family now had no choice but to choose between submission and war.

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"Darling, Tyler seems to like you a lot. I think you should marry him." Jessica coaxed. Tyler and Natasha were still engaged, so the best solution would be to use their marriage to resolve this conflict.

"He doesn't like me-he just likes himself. I'm nothing but a tool to him," Natasha retorted icily.

"That's impossible. He's willing to resolve this issue peacefully. Isn't it obvious enough?" Jessica continued to persuade.

"He's someone who doesn't care about his own sister's death. Do you think he's still a good person?" Natasha shot back.

"But..." Jessica didn't know what to say.

"Tyler is a power-hungry person. Natasha would never be happy if she married him. We have to reevaluate this marriage." Hector announced, displeased with the situation.

Previously, he had held out hope for the Grants, but he was now utterly disappointed. There was no way he would watch as his daughter jumped into this pit of fire.

“Hector, it’s clearly written that if Natasha doesn’t marry him, we’ll have to deal with the Grants’ wrath. When the time comes...” Jessica hesitated. She knew that their family wouldn’t be able to withstand the Grants’ retaliation.

“We will face this battle head-on.” Hector inhaled deeply, his gaze turning determined. “If the Grants insist on challenging us, we’ll rise to the occasion. Worst case scenario, our families will no longer be friends.”

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The next morning, in the president’s office of the Nicholson Corp., Dahlia was sipping a cup of coffee as she went through sheets of financial statements.

Just then, someone knocked on her door.

“Come in.” Dahlia put her

cup

down.

“You called for me, Ms. Nicholson?” Dustin pushed the door open and entered. As Chief Security Officer, he needed to check in at the company every day.

“Where were you last night? I couldn’t reach you on the phone.” Dahlia probed just as he stepped in.

“My friend got into some trouble, so I went to help out.” Dustin grinned sheepishly.

“Your friend? It isn’t Natasha Harmon, is it?” Dahlia’s brow rose in suspicion. “No wonder you were so enthusiastic, it turns out you were on a date with a chick.”

Dustin cleared his throat and quickly changed the subject before Dahlia became jealous. “You didn’t call me over just to talk about this, did you, Ms. Nicholson?”

“As if I’m that bored.” Dahlia retorted and rolled her eyes. “An important client is arriving later, and we have to serve her well. Make sure you take care of all matters related to security.”

“No problem.” Dustin nodded.

“It’s almost time for us to meet at the café downstairs. Let’s go.” Dahlia glanced at her watch before grabbing her purse and walking out of the room. Dustin quickly followed suit.

The two of them went downstairs and walked into the café next door. As soon as they sat down, a bright red Ferrari slowly pulled up to the entrance.

The door swung open, and a woman in a red bodycon dress stepped out. Her vibrant scarlet lips, beautiful face, and voluptuous figure were striking, and her long, smooth legs seemed to go on for miles, and her black, sheer pantyhoses only made her more alluring than ever.

“She’s here!” Dahlia sprung up as soon as the woman walked into the shop. Dahlia extended her hand with a kind smile. “Hello, Ms. Larson. I’m Dahlia Nicholson. Nice to meet you.”

“I didn’t think that Nicholson Corp.’s new president would be a woman. How interesting.” Ms. Larson removed her sunglasses, revealing her surprised expression.

“You flatter me, Miss. Please take a seat.” Dahlia gestured to the seat beside her.

“And who might this handsome man be?” Ms. Larson gave Dustin a flirty smile as she scanned

him from head to toe.

“This is our Chief Security Officer, Dustin Rhys. He’s responsible for our security.” Dahlia

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introduced.

“My safety is in your hands now, Mr. Rhys.” Ms. Larson reached out a hand for Dustin to shake.

“It’s my duty.” Dustin smiled softly and shook her outstretched hand. “You seem familiar, Ms. Larson. Have we met before?” Dustin just couldn’t shake off the feeling that they knew each other.

Ms. Larson giggled. “Your flirting skills still need some work, Mr. Rhys. It’s too old-fashioned.

“Dustin!” Dahlia glared, annoyed. How could he flirt with her client in front of her?

“I must have mistaken you for someone else.” Dustin smiled apologetically.

“I’m so sorry, Ms. Lardon. He’s very inexperienced. Please forgive him.” Dahlia apologized, embarrassed.

“It’s alright. I understand. Men are always like that.” Ms. Larson smirked teasingly, slowly crossing her s\*xxy legs elegantly.

“Let’s get down to business, Ms. Larson.” Dahlia quickly changed the topic. “I suggest

building a casino on the newly developed land. Please take a look at my proposal.” She handed a document to Ms. Larson.

“Let me see.” Ms. Larson accepted the document and began looking through it, but for some reason, she kept peeking at Dustin.

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Ms. Larson’s gaze was lustful as she peeked at Dustin, who met her eyes calmly. He was still racking his brain, trying to recall where he had seen her before.

“Stop looking!” Dahlia quickly realized what was amiss and gave Dustin a warning kick. This was the second time. Dustin had grown bolder during the past few days since he was gone and didn’t even bother being discreet anymore.



“Ms. Nicholson, I don’t understand these parts. Can you explain them to me?” Ms. Larson placed the document on the table and pointed at a section of the contract.

“Sure, let me explain.” With a professional smile, Dahlia began explaining everything in detail to Ms. Larson, who wasn’t actually listening.

Ms. Larson silently slipped off one of her heels and brushed her feet against Dustin’s shoe lightly.

“What?” Dustin raised an eyebrow, puzzled.

When he lifted his head, he was met with Ms. Larson’s teasing and flirty smile. He merely drew his eyes away and pretended to see nothing.

Ms. Larson smirked and took a sip of her coffee before slowly brushing her feet upwards, caressing Dustin from his foot to his thigh, making the man jerk and his breathing quicken.

“What on earth is she doing? How could she do something like this in broad daylight? She’s too bold!” Dustin exclaimed to himself. He inhaled deeply and pulled his leg away, pretending nothing happened.

However, this only encouraged the woman to become bolder. She placed her entire foot on Dustin’s thigh and rubbed back and forth invitingly.

Dustin immediately frowned and shot her a warning glare.

In response, Ms. Larson flashed him a coquettish smile and extended her tongue to sensually lick the coffee off the corner of her lips; her movements were undoubtedly alluring.

Once again, Dustin pulled his leg away to put some distance between them. However, Ms. Larson continued to pester him.

Unable to take it anymore, he grabbed her foot and squeezed it warningly.

“Oh!” She moaned, shooting Dustin a sulking look.

“What’s wrong, Ms. Larson? Are you feeling unwell?” Dahlia caught Ms. Larson’s change in expression and asked.

Dustin thought Ms. Larson would make up an excuse; however, the woman suddenly lifted the tablecloth and pointed at her foot. "Mr. Rhys is hurting me."

Dustin stiffened instantly. What the

"What?" Dahlia looked down instinctively to see Dustin grabbing onto Ms. Larson's foot tightly, painting quite a raunchy scene.

"I-I didn't do anything!"

Flabbergasted, Dustin quickly let go of Ms. Larson, looking guilty. He didn't expect Ms. Larson to be so bold and to play the victim.

"Dustin! Rhys!" Dahlia, whose face was red with anger, seethed through gritted teeth, her expression murderous.

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"What are you doing, Dustin?" Dahlia's eyebrows arched above her wide eyes, and she had to restrain herself from biting Dustin directly.

At first, she thought he was only admiring Ms. Larson's figure. Never did she imagine he would be daring enough to start messing around with someone he was meeting for the first time while completely ignoring her.

"This is a misunderstanding, Dahlia. She was the one who put her foot out." Dustin blushed. Although he was innocent, he couldn't help but feel a little guilty.

"So what if Ms. Larson stretched her leg? It doesn't mean you have permission to touch her." Dahlia growled.

"I-" Dustin didn't know how to explain himself.

"Hmph! I had a feeling you were up to no good when I saw you staring at Ms. Larson. Were you having dirty thoughts about her?" Dahlia's breathing quickened.

Was she not pretty enough? Why was Dustin paying attention to someone else other than her? What a player!

“It’s not what you’re thinking, Dahlia!” Dustin was exasperated.

“Stop making excuses! I saw everything!” Dahlia was fuming at this point. He dared claim that he was innocent after he was caught molesting Ms. Larson!

“Calm down, Ms. Nicholson. I’m sure Mr. Rhys was just messing around.” Ms. Larson just smiled calmly.

“There’s a limit to how far he can go. He obviously had dirty intentions!” Dahlia humphed and shot Dustin a glare.

“It’s fine. I don’t mind.” Ms. Larson took a sip of her coffee, a playful expression on her face.

“What?” Dahlia was taken aback by the other woman’s response and immediately understood that both parties had consented to this.

Her blood boiling, Dahlia slammed her high heel into Dustin’s foot, making him grimace in pain silently.

Just then, her phone began to ring. She took a deep breath and forced a smile. “Please excuse me while I take this call, Ms. Larson.”

As soon as she got up and left, Dustin finally spoke up. “Ms. Larson, this is our first time meeting. I don’t think what you did was appropriate.”

“Are you saying that it’s fine if I did that after getting acquainted with you?” Ms. Larson smirked teasingly.

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“Of course not!” Dustin immediately refused. “Please mind your manners, especially in public, Ms. Larson.”

“How interesting. Don’t people say that all men are cheaters? Are you going to be an exception?” Ms. Larson giggled, and leisurely stirred her coffee.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” Dustin replied coldly.

“I’ll be frank. I’m interested in you, and I want to be your sugar mama, so name your price.” Ms. Larson smirked.

“Sorry, but I prefer to earn my own keep.” Dustin refused without hesitation.

“I don’t mind forcing you, you know?” Ms. Larson tossed her car keys onto the table. “Isn’t that car gorgeous? She’s the latest Ferrari model. You can have her if you like.”

“Are you insulting me?” Dustin’s brows furrowed.

“Is it not enough? Fine. I have a villa in Amethyst Meadows worth 30 million dollars. I don’t have time to stay there anyway, so it’s yours now.” Ms. Larson pulled out another set of keys.

She sure was flaunting her wealth by giving away such an expensive car and villa so easily. It was easy to imagine how many men dreamed of possessing such a beautiful, rich, and generous woman.

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“Are you trying to bribe me with just a villa? What do you take me for?” Dustin remained indifferent.

“Looks like it’s time to get serious.” Ms. Larson giggled. “How about this? I’ll let you into some insider information. The abandoned buildings in Eastville are going to be redeveloped. Your investment will double tenfold if you can get ahold of them. Of course, how many buildings you can buy depends on your wealth. The more you buy, the more you’ll earn. With enough capital, you’ll easily earn anything between a billion dollars to eight billion. What do you think? Is the offer attractive enough?”

Dustin narrowed his eyes. “Ms. Larson, you’re very generous, but I still don’t understand why you’d tell me about an opportunity that could rake in billions?”

It was their first time meeting, yet Ms. Larson was being extremely generous, even going as far as to offer him a car, a house, and a chance to hit the jackpot. Although Dustin was quite a good-looking guy, it wasn’t enough to

charm every woman in the world. Besides, a rich woman like her would have met all sorts of men before him, so he couldn't help but be suspicious of her.

"Didn't I tell you earlier? You caught my eye, and I want to be your sugar mama." Ms. Larson just continued to smile, her intentions hidden.

"Do you think I'll believe that?" Dustin responded calmly. "I don't know what tricks you're up to, but

you better not mess around with me. I'm not someone who knows how to cherish pretty things."

"How interesting." Ms. Larson laughed, her shoulder shaking. "I didn't expect you to be so on guard, miracle doctor. And here I thought I'd have a chance in bed with you tonight."

"What?" Dustin frowned. "Who are you?"

"Take a guess." Ms. Larson reached out to cover half of her face, leaving her twinkling eyes exposed. "Can you tell yet?"

"You!" Dustin's eyes widened as realization dawned.

Her attire might have changed, but her eyes hadn't. The voluptuous temptress was none other than the Dark Lord's disciple, Azalea!

No wonder she seemed so familiar to her. She was that witch!

"Finally," Azalea Larson smirked. "You didn't expect us to meet again this way, did you?"

"Were you following me?" Dustin demanded with a frown.

"Nope. I'm just here for a business meeting. Me meeting you here was pure coincidence." Azalea said with a smile.

"What do you want?" Dustin growled.

"Take a guess." Azalea tilted her head sideways.

"Dustin..." Just then, Dahlia finally returned after wrapping up her phone call, her expression grave.

“What’s wrong?” Dustin was puzzled.

“Some people beat up my mom, and she’s in the hospital right now, so I have to rush over there immediately,” Dahlia explained.

“She was beaten up? What happened?” Dustin was surprised.

“I’m not too sure, either. I’ll know after going to the hospital.” Dahlia focused her attention on Azalea. “My apologies, Ms. Larson, but this is an emergency. Would you mind if we continued this discussion on another day?”

“No problem. You guys should deal with that first.” Azalea nodded.

“Thank you for your understanding, Ms. Larson.” Dahlia flashed a polite smile and pulled Dustin out of there.

Azalea’s lip curled as she watched the two of them walk away and mumbled, “What a fine prey. I haven’t felt so excited in ages. You’ll be mine.”

## **An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 539 -**

### Chapter 539

As soon as Dustin and Dahlia reached one of the wards of Ansdale South Hospital, they were greeted by the ghastly sight of Florence moaning in pain, her body wrapped in bloodstained bandages.

“How do you feel, Mom?” Dahlia asked worriedly as she walked into the room.

“You’re finally here, Dahlia!” Florence immediately burst into tears and wailed. “I’m so sorry. I made a mistake, and I don’t deserve to live anymore.” She slammed her head into the wall several times, tearing up from the pain.

“What are you doing, Mom?” Dahlia quickly pulled her mother in for a hug to stop her from hurting herself. “Can’t we talk this out? Why are you trying to commit suicide?”

“I-I’m too embarrassed to tell you!” Florence thumped her chest sadly.

“James, what in the world happened?” Dahlia looked at her brother, who was standing next to their mother.

“Mom got scammed. Our savings are all gone now!” He cried.

“Scammed? Elaborate further.” Dahlia frowned.

“Do you remember Julie’s boyfriend, Terrence Stone? He’s that manager at the Brooks Corporation.”

“Of course, I do. Why?” Dahlia nodded.

“He lied to us!” James accused. “We were having dinner with Aunt Victoria last night when he suddenly came up to us and told us that the Brooks Corporation had a new real estate project and asked if we would be interested in investing.

“He claimed that the prices would be low since we’d get a special price because he knew an insider. We thought he was being kind, so we agreed. He promised that our investment would double in return after half a year, and the more we invested, the greater our return. We were blinded by greed and signed the contract stupidly, putting all our money in.

“Then, guess what? When we visited the development site this morning, we realized that the so-called new real-estate project was nothing but a cluster of abandoned buildings! It’s been left alone for years, and now we’re in charge of taking care of this mess! Now, besides wasting all our savings, we’ve also collected huge debts!”

James seethed, regretting their decision last night. They shouldn’t have gotten greedy and fallen into Terrence’s trap.

“Where’s Terrence now?” Dahlia interrogated.

“I don’t know.” James shook his head. “He hasn’t been picking up his phone since morning.

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When we went to ask his company, they said he had been fired and was nowhere to be found!" "When didn't you tell me about this right away?" Dahlia was displeased with this issue.

One shouldn't aim too high when they don't possess the necessary skills. Those individuals were the easiest to scam and swindle money out of.

"We didn't know he was a scammer, so we got careless and..." James sighed. They had complete faith in Terrence because he was a manager at Brooks Corporation; they never expected that he had been fired a long time ago.

"How did Mom get all beaten up?" Dahlia asked.

"She couldn't find Terrence, so she went to find the developer instead, demanding they refund us, but they refused, saying that we had already signed the contract, so Mom kicked up

a fuss and got into a brawl with someone," James explained.

"What?" Dahlia frowned. "How much did you lose in total this time?"

## **An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 540 -**

Chapter 540

James merely held out a finger.

"Ten million?" Dahlia took a deep breath and tried to suppress her anger. "It's quite a lot, but

at least we can still pay it back. Treat it as the price of a lesson learned."

"You've got it wrong, Sis. It's not just ten million dollars; it's a hundred million." James mumbled weakly.

"A hundred million?!" Dahlia paled. "Are you serious? Where did you get so much money in the first place?"



“We had a few million in savings. Then, we used our two villas to take out loans. Mom stole the remaining tens of thousands from you.” James shrank back and confessed softly.

“What?” Dahlia’s blood boiled. “A-are you guys crazy? Taking loans and stealing? Who said you could do that?”

Who in their right mind would sell their house to invest in a business? What a fool!

“It’s all my fault, Dahlia. I’m so sorry. I should die instead!” Florence moaned and began banging her head on the wall again, acting so well that she deserved an Oscar.

“Enough!” Dahlia yelled. “Rather than commit suicide, why don’t you think of a way to take care of this mess?”

“You’re the president of Cardinal Group now. A hundred million dollars shouldn’t be a lot to you, right?” Florence asked tentatively.

“Yeah, right!” Dahlia humphed, irritated. “I borrowed ten billion and merely bought a portion of the company’s shares. It’s not time for dividends yet, so I don’t have any spare cash. Besides, I have a one-billion-dollar loan to pay back, so I’ll be in debt for the next three years!”

“What? Is it that serious?” Florence was shocked. She thought Dahlia was living a glorious life after being promoted to President and didn’t know that her daughter was struggling so badly. “Aunt Florence.” Just then, Julie and her mother, Victoria, walked into the room.

“Julie, you’re here. How did it go? Did you manage to find Terence?” Florence sprung up expectantly. Things were still salvageable if they could catch Terrence.

“We couldn’t get ahold of him at all. I’m sure he ran away.” Julie sighed.

“Who knew that he was a swindler? Curse our rotten luck!” Victoria spat.

“Julie, Terrence is your boyfriend. How do you propose we solve this issue?” James demanded.

“What does it have to do with me? I’m not the one who lied to you!” Julie frowned. “Besides,

we’re victims too! We lost a lot of money as well!”

“Who knows if you guys are working together?” James retorted.

“Hey! What do you mean by that?” Julie sprung up and demanded.

“Enough. We’re a family. It’s not the time to fight right now. We should be working together to get past this storm.” Florence placated. “Dahlia, you’re the smartest here. What should we do now?”

“Admit defeat, I guess. Whatever else?” Dahlia grumbled.

“I have an idea.” Suddenly thinking of an idea, Julie whispered. “Since Terrence lied to us, we can do the same to someone else. As long as we find another scapegoat, everything will be fine.

“That’s a good idea. My daughter is so smart!” Victoria’s eyes immediately lit up. Julie was right. Rather than suffering themselves, why don’t they make someone else suffer? They should just act in their own interests.

“That is a good idea, but where will we find the scapegoat?” James rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

“A scapegoat?” Florence thought about it for a second, and her eyes shot to Dustin. Wasn’t there a perfect one right there?