

## **An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 381 -**

### Chapter 381

“Why? Just why!” Jayla burned with jealousy. If she had known the gemstone was hiding a priceless treasure, she would never have sold it. In the end, it ended up in the hands of a country bumpkin! What a loss!

“What a turn of events. This is such a blessing!” Dustin held the Flower of Crimson Gem up in one hand, the corner of his lips curling up into a wide smile. From the moment he laid eyes on the gemstone, he knew it was hiding something exceptional. Just as he expected, he had discovered a true treasure.

The Flower of Crimson Gem was not an ordinary flower. It was an extremely rare treasure.

Typically, it could only be found in red gemstones. And it just so happened that the red gemstone

on auction today was a Crimson Gem.

Previously, he felt regretful thinking about the 900-year green lotus. However, the appearance of the Flower of Crimson Gem came as a blessing and a happy surprise. At least he didn't travel all

the way here for nothing.

“Ms. Grant, don't you think a price of two billion dollars is extremely worth it for this precious

item?” He turned to look at her and flashed a smile. “Should I say you're the true idiot here?”

“You...” Jayla was rendered speechless. The vicious words she had thrown out earlier at them

were now directed at herself. She had spent three billion to purchase a subpar item, while Dustin

had paid a mere two billion in exchange for an invaluable treasure. The stark difference was

maddening!

“Ms. Grant, thank you for the treasure. We shall meet again soon.” Dustin smiled and prepared to

leave.

“Hold it!” Jayla suddenly called out to him. “Did I say you could leave?”

“Hmm? Are you going to treat us to a meal?” Dustin smiled teasingly.

“Stop talking back. I’m taking that Flower of Crimson Gem! Name your price!” She demanded angrily. Naturally, she wasn’t going to give up such a rare gem

Dustin refused her outright. “I’m sorry, I’m not selling it.

“Not selling?” Jayla scoffed coldly. “Let me tell you honestly. Since I want it, you are selling that

treasure to me no matter what.”

Dustin raised his eyebrows. “Oh? Since when has that been the law?”

“Shut up! My words are the law!” She glared at him. “Don’t paint me as a bully. Since you spent two billion to purchase it, I’ll buy it back from you for two billion! You won’t incur any losses!”

“And if I don’t?” Dustin smiled. Did she take him for an idiot? He was to resell a two-billion-dollar

purchase for two billion dollars?

“Then you’ll bear the consequences!” Jayla threatened.

The Flower of Crimson Gem would be able to elevate her brother’s martial arts prowess to another level. That was the reason she needed to obtain it, even if that meant putting down her dignity.

“It’s a priceless treasure! It’s definitely a priceless treasure!”

“Damn it, that punk spent a mere two billion for a Flower of Crimson Gem. Lucky bastard!”

The crowd looked at the Flower of Crimson Gem with tremendous greed and envy, like a beggar who chanced upon gold. A few daring individuals had even started concocting a plan secretly.

“Flower of Crimson Gem? How is that possible?” Jayla was dumbfounded as she looked on in disbelief.

A Flower of Crimson Gem was an extremely rare treasure that could only be chanced upon once in a blue moon. It was much more valuable than a thousand-year green lotus. Who would have thought she could encounter it in a place like this?

At the heart of the matter, the Grant family was the one who discovered that red gemstone, and she had delivered it personally to the auction house. In other words, she had given away that priceless treasure!

The realization left her feeling light-headed.

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“How disappointing. It seems like the Grant family only amounts to so much.” He shook his head.

“Let me repeat myself. I’m not selling the Flower of Crimson Gem. If you insist on stealing it from me, don’t blame me for taking action.” With that, he left, with Roderick following after him.

“Hmph, we’ll see who has the last laugh.” Jayla sneered and took out her phone, making a phone call..

In the whole Southern Province, he was the first to not yield to the Grants. Since he didn’t wish to part with his treasure, he shouldn’t blame her for his own demise.

They had just left the auction house when Dustin noticed they were being followed. He had to admit that the Grants were pretty efficient. It seemed like this wasn’t their first time.

“Mr. Rhys, it appears we have some unwanted company,” Roderick remarked, also noticing the tail.

“No need to bother about them. Let’s just leave quickly.” Dustin didn’t bother to confront them and was prepared to leave. However, things don’t always go as planned. A group of masked men suddenly had them surrounded when they reached a certain alley. There were around 20 to 30 men, each armed with a weapon.

“Hey, punk! I heard you got a valuable treasure with you. Give it to us, and I might let you two walk away alive!” The leader of the group brandished his knife, his tone frosty.

“Do you mean this?” Dustin took out the Flower of Crimson Gem.

The leader’s gaze betrayed his excitement. “That’s the one! Give it to me now!”

“Come get it yourself if you can.” Dustin placed it back into his pockets and beckoned them forward with his finger.

The leader's expression darkened. He felt like he was being played. "Die, punk! Get him! We need to get that item back!" On his orders, the masked men charged forward at the same time.

Dustin smiled lightly, then flicked his wrist. Numerous silver needles shot out with sharp whistles, piercing straight into the men's acupoints. The next second, they were frozen to the spot, and their weapons were still raised. It appeared as if time stopped for them, and the only thing they could move was their eyes.

"What?" The leader's expression betrayed his horror as he took in the scene before him. Without any warning, another silver needle shot out and pierced into his neck. What followed was a numbing sensation that was hard to suppress. No matter how much he struggled to free himself, it was in vain.

"W—who are you?" He spat out with difficulty.

"I'm in a good mood today. I don't wish to kill." Dustin walked up to him and said coolly.

"When you get back, ask Jayla to stop provoking me. Otherwise, she wouldn't be able to handle it when I decide enough is enough." With that, he left haughtily, with Roderick behind him.

After 15 minutes, Jayla arrived at the scene and frowned. Not only was Dustin nowhere to be found, but her bodyguards were all frozen in their spots.

"What happened? Where's my Flower of Crimson Gem?" Jayla questioned them sternly.

The leader appeared helpless as he responded, "Ms. Grant, he's too strong. We're no match for him."

"What a bunch of useless trash! What am I paying you for if you can't even handle some country bumpkin?" Jayla snapped at them.

They lowered their heads, unable to utter a word.

"Where did they go?" Jayla demanded.

The leader pondered for a moment. "I don't know. But from their accents, they should be from Swinton."

“Swinton?” She narrowed her eyes. “It just so happens that I’m heading there tomorrow to ask for the bride’s hand in my brother’s stead. Since he’s from Swinton, I’m going to find him no matter what!”

“Ms. Grant, he doesn’t seem like an ordinary person,” The leader advised.

“Hah! So what? Even if he had three heads and six arms. I’ll make sure to deal with him cleanly!”

She cocked her head up in confidence. “Hey! What are you still standing there for? Go back and get ready! We need to put on a good show worthy of our name for our journey to Swinton tomorrow!”

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The next day, back at Swinton, a convoy of luxury cars drove into Park Palace in a grandiose display. As their procession moved through the streets, it left a lasting impression of power and splendor.

By the entrance, the entire Harmon family had been waiting, with Jessica in the lead.

As the vehicles came to a stop, Jayla, who was dressed in luxurious clothing, was the first to disembark with an arrogant look on her face.

“Jayla, you’re here! Please, come in.” Jessica greeted her with a smile and a welcoming attitude. The person she was greeting was Tyler’s sister. Her standing among the entire Grant family was not to be taken lightly.

Jayla nodded in response. “Jessica, long time no see. Where’s Natasha? Why don’t I see her?”

“She’s inside getting ready. She won’t take much longer,” Jessica explained with a smile.

“Jayla, I prepared something for you when I found out you were visiting. Have a look.” At that moment, Quentin, who was standing beside them, took out a sapphire the size of an egg and passed it to her with both hands. Jayla was not

only gorgeous, but she also came from a powerful family. That was why he knew she was the best match for him. Naturally, he wouldn't give up the chance to leave a good impression.

It was his belief that every woman was weak against jewelry.

Jayla glanced at it. "Thanks." However, instead of receiving it herself, she had the maid take it and put it away.

"Uh..." As he took in her disinterested look, the corners of his mouth twitched. He purchased that sapphire from some Amberson woman for more than a hundred million dollars. He had spent quite a fortune to impress the gorgeous woman and was aggrieved at her reaction.

"I should have gotten something cheaper," Quentin silently mumbled.

"Jayla, tea is almost ready. Let's head in first." Jessica smoothed things over and invited the entourage inside. After they took their seats, she asked, "Jayla, may I know what brings you to Swinton this time?"

"Jessica, in truth, I'm here regarding my brother's wedding." She drank a sip of tea and continued, "According to the marriage agreement, there are around 200 days left before the union between the Harmons and the Grants. I'm just wondering how the preparations are going."

"There is no need to worry. The Harmons' annual family gathering will be in a few days. We'll be making arrangements during the gathering," Jessica replied with a smile.

"That would be the best." Jayla nodded and changed the subject. "However, I've been hearing rumors lately that Natasha has a boyfriend. I wonder if they are true."

Jessica's expression froze slightly with her words before she dismissed the idea with a wave of her hand. "That's not true, of course. You shouldn't listen to gossip like that. Besides, who could compare to your brother in the entire seven provinces of Balerno?"

"That's good to hear. You should be aware that my brother is deeply devoted to Natasha, and he



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also has strict principles and doesn't tolerate betrayals. With his personality, if he heard about the rumors, there's no guarantee how he would retaliate." Her words carried a hint of threat as she

warned.

"Please don't worry. It is inevitable for our families to come together. I have faith the wedding will be held according to schedule." Jessica smiled assuringly.

"Great!" Jayla raised her brows. "My brother will be back in two days. He will also be personally attending the Harmons' annual gathering to ask for the bride's hand. I'm here to inform you of this

in advance."

"No problem. We will make all the necessary arrangements." Jessica nodded with a smile.

While they were talking, Natasha, who had finally finished getting ready, walked out of her bedroom.

"Natasha, you're here. Sit down. We were just discussing your marriage with Tyler."

Natasha raised her hand and interrupted her. "I heard everything. Jayla, my apologies in advance. I'm afraid we won't be able to go through with this marriage."

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Everyone stood in shock at her words. No one could believe Natasha dared say that.

"Natasha? What nonsense are you spouting? Are you sleep talking?!" Jessica gave her a look.

Natasha said calmly, "I'm fully awake, and I am well aware of what I just said. It is regrettable, but

I need to express my feelings today. Tyler and I are unsuited for each other."

"Natasha, what do you mean by this?" Jayla's brow knitted. A slightly uneasy feeling crept up within her.

"I'm backing out of this marriage." Just like that, Natasha dropped the bomb.

"You're backing out?" Jayla's expression darkened at her words. She snapped at her. "Natasha Harmon, are you insane?! How dare you break off a union with the Grants? The audacity!" Jessica warned, "Natasha, stop your nonsense. You can't say those things lightly!"

The Grant family was part of the Tremendous Three. Whether it was their connections or their legacy, the Grants surpassed the Harmon's in every aspect. Especially with Tyler, the exceptional genius, at the helm, the Grant family had been elevated to unparalleled heights. It wouldn't be too far off to say that they were very close to becoming the strongest among the Tremendous Three. Many affluent families could only dream of having an association with the Grant family. However, Natasha wanted to back out of the marriage instead. It was like slapping the Grants in the face.

"I am indeed the party at fault in this situation. I sincerely apologize. If you think this will deal a blow to your reputation, you can be the one to make the announcement. I'll take the blame. In any case, I will never marry Tyler," Natasha spoke calmly with a resolute gaze.

"Natasha Harmon, do you think you are the one who calls the shots here? Who do you think you are? This union is a joint decision between both families. You are not worthy of giving your opinion!" Jayla erupted in a fury.

Natasha responded coldly, "I can comply with everything else the family arranges, but marriage is out of the question!"

"Hah! I don't think you understand the situation. You should be honored that my brother is interested in you! As for calling off this marriage, your opinion doesn't matter. My brother is the one who calls the shots!" Jayla glared at her.

"Then, kindly inform your brother to call off the marriage."

“Dream on!” Jayla refused immediately. “My brother always gets what he wants. It doesn’t matter if you agree to it or not. This wedding is going ahead as planned!”

“I will not marry Tyler.” Natasha shook her head again. She refused to destroy her chance at happiness for a marriage of convenience.

“Natasha, as the daughter of a prominent family, you should be aware that there are certain matters beyond your control. You should think about the entire Harmon family, not just yourself. If you dare to break off this marriage, you will be making an enemy out of the Grants!

“Even if my brother won’t touch you, your enemies will definitely not let you go easily. They have

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restrained themselves thus far because of our support. How long do you think your family can last without our protection? I recall that your father is in conflict with the Dark Lord. Without my brother, do you think you guys can fend him off by yourselves?

“Think carefully about it! In seven days, we will be attending the Harmons’ annual family gathering. Whether we end up friends or foes depends entirely on your decision!

“We’re leaving.” After leaving them with those harsh words, Jayla stormed off with her entourage.

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“Natasha Harmon! What’s wrong with you? Who gave you the green light to call off the marriage?” Once Jayla left, Jessica finally unleashed her temper. The marriage concerned the fate of their family, and she would not allow Natasha to do as she wished.

“Natasha, do you know how lucky you are to be able to marry Tyler Grant? What are you doing? Calling off the marriage?” Quentin felt like he was staring at a fool. Tyler Grant was the cream of the crop of the Southern province, and t

he hope of Dragonmarsh. Before he hit thirty, he had been appointed as a general who led tens of thousands of men. Young and talented, he was deemed the best bachelor, and women fell on his feet in admiration.

To their dismay, Natasha had no interest in Tyler at all, which everyone thought was dumb.

“I will have the final say in my marriage. I have no feelings for Tyler, and I won’t marry him,” she replied calmly. In the past, she would have accepted an arranged marriage in the interest of the Harmon Family, especially when Tyler was an impeccable candidate in terms of family background, talent, and potential. He was literally perfect. She would meet everyone’s expectations by marrying Tyler, but now, she only had eyes for Dustin.

“You can develop your feelings for him over time. No matter what, you’re marrying him!” Jessica declared firmly. “This is the only way you’ll be happy, and we will be safe. If you call off the marriage, you’ll put your family in trouble!”

“Right, Natasha! You better not forget about the existence of the Dark Lord. He’s a looming threat to our family. Without the Grant Family’s backing, the Dark Lord might come for us at any time!”

Quentin warned her sternly.

But she replied with a frown, “I will think of a way to deal with the Dark Lord.”

“Deal with him? How?! It’s been ten years. Every year, one of us Harmons would be killed for no good reason. Even after your dad and your uncle hired experts and gave their best efforts, they have no way to stop the Dark Lord, so what makes you think you can take him down?” Jessica

retorted.

“Give me some time. I can do it.” Natasha had a determined look in her eyes.

Jessica shook her head. “There’s no time. In seven days, Tyler will show up at our annual family gathering to ask for your hand in marriage. If you turn him down, our family might as well be

ruined.”

Natasha fell into

a heavy silence. She only had seven days left, and she had no idea what her fate would be if she could not come up with a solution.

Meanwhile, Dustin was at the Nicholson Villa, where he handed Dahlia a check. "Here you go. These are the investments I got for you."

"Investments?" She took a better look and froze up. "One billion dollars? Where did you get that money from?"

"I have a friend who works at a bank. I got him to issue me an interest-free loan. This will tide you

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over," Dustin explained. Technically, he wasn't lying because Roderick Brooks indeed owned a few private banks.

"When did you have a friend in the bank?" Dahlia looked at him curiously. The friend practically lost out on the deal if it was an interest-free loan, and that was a pretty huge favor for Dustin to

return.

"I'm a doctor, after all. I save lives all day, so it's not weird for me to make friends along the way."

He shrugged.

"That's true." She nodded and beamed at the sight of the check in her hands. "I have to say, you really helped me a lot this time. With this one billion check, I will secure my position as the chairman of Cardinal Group."

"A billion-dollar check? What are you talking about?" Florence and James wandered into the room

at that moment.

“Mom, look at this!” Dahlia handed Florence the check. The latter was overjoyed when she saw the figure on the check. “D—d—did I see wrongly? This is a check worth one billion!”

“One billion?” James’ eyes bulged in shock. He had never seen that insane amount of money in his life.

“How’s that? It’s a surprise, isn’t it? Dustin brought me the check,” Dahlia showed off proudly.

“Dustin?” Florence furrowed her brows and examined him from head to toe with doubt. “Are you sure he’s capable of this? Is the check a fake?”

“Of course not. I verified it multiple times. It’s a real check!” Dahlia looked serious.

“This can’t be right! He’s dirt poor. Since when is he loaded?” James remained suspicious.

“I might be poor, but I have a couple of rich friends. If you don’t trust me, just hand the check back to me.” Dustin gestured for the check.

“We trust you! Of course, we do!” Florence hurriedly stuffed the check into her pocket and squeezed a smile at him. “Oh, Dustin, you’ve changed in such a short time! I never thought you’d have a billionaire friend! When are you going to introduce him to us?”

An extra connection would open up paths. A man who could lend a billion dollars in one go was definitely someone remarkable. If the Nicholsons could get on his good side, they would benefit immensely from this relationship in the future.

James protested with displeasure, “Mom, are you seriously falling for all his garbage?”

“You’re the garbage!” Florence spat at him and gave him a good slap on the back of her head. She chided him, “You little brat! Watch your manners when you speak to your brother-in-law! Speak nicely!”

“Huh?” James was caught off-guard by the sudden change in his mom’s attitude. She had been haughtily pointing fingers at Dustin, but in a matter of seconds, she was smiling and groveling at him.

James thought, “It’s shocking how she changes in a blink of an eye! What a skil!”

“Dustin, are you hungry? Do you want me to cook you some food? By the way, don’t forget to share the contact details of that friend with me. I need to ask him for advice on personal finance matters.

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“Florence was practically glowing with a level of enthusiasm unseen before.

“It’s alright. I’m not hungry.” Dustin shook his head. This was the first time he received such warm treatment from Florence in his three years of marriage, and he wondered if that was the

power of money.

“Mom, you should go get the groceries. I need to go somewhere with Dustin, and we’ll come home for a meal later,” Dahlia suddenly suggested.

“Where are you going?” Florence questioned.

“Of course, we’re on our way to make Madam Gloria fulfill her promise. We now have a billion dollars worth of investments. They have nothing to say, even if they’re unwilling to make me the chairman!” Dahlia smiled brightly.

“Okay! Go now and have that chairman position secured!” Florence urged her daughter to leave with excitement.

Once Dahlia secured the position as the chairman of Cardinal Group, she would be one step closer to becoming the head of the Nicholson Family, and the rest of them would be elevated to a higher

status as a result too.

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A Mercedes–Benz rolled to a stop in front of a villa with a great riverside view.

“Dahlia, I won’t go with you. I splashed tea on Madam Gloria yesterday. I bet she won’t be glad to see me.” Dustin chuckled.

“That’s fine. Wait for me here. I’ll be back soon.” Dahlia gave him a firm nod and marched into the villa alone.

At that time, Gloria was having her tea leisurely, with Dakota seated right beside her, massaging her shoulders and legs with great care.

“Madam, Dahlia asks to meet you.” An elderly lady came up and announced respectfully.

“Why is she here? Is she begging for mercy because she knows that she’s incapable?” Dakota sounded puzzled.

Gloria put her teacup on the table and replied calmly, “Let her in.”

“Yes, Madam.” The elderly servant shuffled away and led Dahlia into the villa.

“You have something to ask from me?” Gloria looked up at the sudden visitor.

“Madam Gloria, I have completed your request. Here’s a check for one billion dollars. Please take a look.” While speaking, Dahlia handed Gloria the check.

“A check of one billion? Are you joking?” Dakota snatched the check away, but her expression fell when she saw the figure on it. “T–there’s a billion here!”

“Let me have a look.” Gloria took the check and examined it. Her face scrunched up in displeasure. “Dahlia, it’s only been a day. Where did you get the money from?”

Gloria had looked into them and knew that Dahlia’s family was incapable of getting a billion dollars worth of investment in such a short timeframe. There was something fishy going on.



“You don’t have to be concerned about that. I have my connections.” Dahlia refused to offer a detailed explanation.

“Hmph! The Nicholson Family has always been upright and honest! If your money comes from a dirty source, it will not be counted!” Gloria reminded her coldly.

“That’s right! Who knows? The money might have come from a robbery or theft! If you don’t offer a clear explanation, we won’t let you off the hook!” Dakota echoed Gloria’s words.

“If you are dying to know, I shall tell you the truth. Dustin borrowed the money.” Dahlia did not bother to hide the fact from them.

“Dustin?” Dakota was first perplexed, followed by a look of disdain. “Oh, Dahlia, you have to make up a better lie than that! The good-for-nothing, Dustin Rhys, can never get his hands on a billion’s worth of investments!”

“Believe it or not, it’s up to you. At the end of the day, we got the money you asked for,” Dahlia remarked calmly.

“Sure, you did. But it’s not enough,” Gloria suddenly said. After the initial shock from the check,

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she quickly recovered and came up with a plan.

“Excuse me?” Dahlia raised a brow. “Madam Gloria, you said you wanted one billion in

investments. Why are you now saying the amount is not enough?”

“I said that indeed. But the one billion dollars that you gave me is not for the investments. It’s for compensation,” Gloria went on with confidence.

“Dustin Rhys was rude enough to splash hot tea in my face. I was scalded because of that. Just think of the one billion as compensation for my medical bills.”

“What?” Dahlia’s expression changed when she heard the unreasonable demand. One billion to make up for scalding her with tea? That was too much!

“Madam Gloria, aren’t you asking for too much?” Frowning, Dahlia had expected Gloria to give her a difficult time, but the way Gloria went about it was ridiculous and shameless.

“Too much?” Gloria scoffed. “That beast, Dustin Rhys, has scalded my face. If we go by the book, I should have broken his legs. However, I will forgive him if I get that one billion as compensation.” “Yeah! One billion dollars in exchange for his legs. It’s a sweet deal for him!” Dakota agreed. She had been racking her brains to break the promise, but she was surprised that Gloria had come up with a solution in no time. Gloria was indeed a wily old fox!

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### Chapter 386

“Madam Gloria, you need to be fair. What you’re doing now is intentionally setting me up to fail!” Dahlia had a sour expression on her face. No sane person would sit still after being robbed of one billion dollars.

“Shut up! Where are your manners when you’re speaking to my grandma? You should know your place!” Dakota yelled at Dahlia.

“You need to pay up for what you’ve done. Dustin lashed out at people, and he should rightly pay for that. This is enough. I’ll be upfront with you. If you pull another one billion dollars, I’ll make you the chairman. If you can’t, you should get

lost.” Gloria waved impatiently in a confident manner, as though she had Dahlia in her grip.

“Why are you still standing there? Get lost now!” Dakota urged Dahlia to leave.

However, before leaving, Dahlia said, “Madam Gloria, since you’re being unfair, I will report this to the patriarch and make him the judge of this case.”

“Stop right there!” With a sullen face, Gloria bellowed, “You rascal! How dare you threaten me? The audacity! Someone give her a slap!”

“On it!” Dakota sneered and gave Dahlia two slaps on the face, leaving two clear marks on the cheeks. Dahlia cradled her face in shock and anger.

“Why? Are you dissatisfied? Slap her two more times!” Gloria roared.

“Yes, Madam!” Dakota slapped Dahlia hard on the face, twice. She had long harbored resentment for Dahlia, the countryside girl with good looks.

Dahlia bit her lips but did not say a word. Instead, she stared straight at Gloria.

“Is she still stubborn? Slap her harder!” Gloria was incensed at the defiant look in Dahlia’s eyes. Not many in the family had the guts to go up against her.

“Beat her up!” Dakota got two elderly servants to beat and kick Dahlia. Within minutes, the poor girl was badly scratched on the face and suffered from bruises all across her body.

“You shameless thing! How dare you talk back to my grandma? I’ll teach you a lesson today!” Dakota released her pent-up anger by hitting and cursing Dahlia. As a member of the direct line of descent, she was jealous at how Dahlia was chosen to be a candidate for the heir position instead. How could a country bumpkin and lowly slut outshine her in terms of looks and grace?

“Stop right there!” When Dakota and the rest of the women were in the middle of the assault, they heard an angry call coming from the entrance.

“Who’s yelling at our place?” Dakota looked up and was about to give the intruder a dressing down. But what greeted her was a hard kick in the face. She yelped helplessly and was thrown a good three feet away. Not only was her nose bent out of shape, but she also lost her front teeth. Her facial structure was slightly affected because of the injuries.

“Dustin Rhys! It’s you again! You animal!” Gloria’s anger reached its peak at the sight of Dustin. She rose up and attempted to hit him with her walking stick.

“Get lost!” Dustin slapped Gloria across the face, sending her collapsing onto the ground.

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“How dare you lay a finger on Madam Gloria? You crossed the line!” The elderly servants standing around were taken aback when they saw that Gloria had been slapped. Enraged, they flung themselves at Dustin and attacked him.

“A bunch of rude b\*tches!” Dustin’s expression hardened, and he slapped the elderly servants out of his way without a word. Some fainted on the spot, some were bleeding from their noses and mouths, and some lost their teeth. Within a blink of an eye, those who assaulted Dahlia were lying on the floor, immobile.

“Dustin Rhys, how dare you hit us? You’re asking for trouble!” Dakota stood up, albeit staggering, with a look of menace and resentment on her face. She was the daughter of a wealthy family, and her grandma was one of the heads of the Nicholson Family. A good-for-nothing like Dustin had beaten them up—he clearly didn’t know his place!

“Not only am I beating you up, but I will also cripple you!” Dustin gave Dakota a heavy kick in the abdomen, sending her flying in the air into a wall, screaming in pain and bleeding from the mouth. “You animal! You’re dead meat! Your entire family is in deep shit! How dare you hurt the Nicholsons? We’ll make you pay for that!” Gloria, who got up from the floor, hissed evilly at Dustin. No one had the audacity to lay a finger on her in many years. This young man had so many balls! “Make me pay? Oh, you don’t have the right to.” He slapped her on t

he face again, and this time, her nose and mouth were hit, and even her fake tooth fell off. Almost instantly, she started convulsing and foaming at the mouth.

“Dustin, don’t hurt them!” Seeing that, Dahlia jumped in to stop him. She was worried that he might accidentally kill Madam Gloria in a fit.

“How are you feeling?” Dustin reined in his temper and helped her up from the floor.

“I only suffered from a few external injuries. It’s nothing.” She forced a smile at him.

“Your face is swollen. How is this ‘nothing’?” Frowning, he looked sulky, and the more he thought about the situation, the angrier he became, knowing they had been taken advantage of.

His temper rose, and he stomped hard on Dakota’s face. Her decent-looking face was instantly horrifically ruined and bruised. Dustin finally felt satisfied and pleased after taking the appropriate revenge.

“I didn’t know you were so vindictive.” Although Dahlia was speechless at the scene, she couldn’t help but feel joy in her heart. It felt good to have someone avenging her.

“If you don’t teach these rude b\*tches a lesson, they will never learn.” He looked cross.

“Beating Dakota up is fine. But you also beat up the elderly, Madam Gloria. I’m worried that we can’t get ourselves out of this.” After the initial joy, she was burdened by new worries.

“I don’t care. If they want revenge, they can come at me.” Dustin sounded fearless.

“She’s an insolent and disrespectful old hag. If I didn’t slap her today, she would’ve really thought she was above everyone else.” With that, he took the check from Gloria’s pocket and left the villa with Dahlia.

Soon after, Gloria stirred awake, still lying on the ground. She was greeted by the mess in the room. Touching her swollen and red face, she bellowed with eyes bulging from anger, "That animal! I will tear both of them into pieces!"

Next, she called a number on her phone. "Hey! Get Tarragon and Cougar here! We're executing the house law!"

When they got back to the Peaceful Medical Center, Dustin immediately took out a tube of medication that he started applying to Dahlia's skin. Dakota and the elderly servants did not go easy on Dahlia at all. The poor victim was covered in bruises on her face, limbs, and across her body. He dared not imagine the outcome had he not intervened in time.

"Dahlia, do you want to learn a few moves from me? At least, you'll have some skills to defend yourself if you ever run into this kind of situation," Dustin suggested while applying the ointment. Her fair skin was as soft as silk to the touch.

"I'm not interested in fighting and killing. And I have you to protect me!" She smiled at him softly. In her opinion, one could not solve problems with violence—that would only lead to more trouble. At the end of the day, an individual would only be powerful because of his or her connections and influence, not their martial arts skills. Many of the big bosses were bad at fighting, but their existence was enough to stop anyone from stirring up trouble. The top dogs garnered respect because of their reputation and influence.

"I'd rather rely on myself. I am only truly strong because I train myself to be." He shook his head. "Take off your clothes. I need to apply the medication to your back."

"Huh?" Her expression froze with awkwardness. "Um, maybe get Caitlyn to help out on this?"

"She's out getting groceries. I'm not asking you to strip naked. Why do you make it sound like I'm taking advantage of you?" He rolled his eyes at her.

"Okay then." She pursed her lips and slowly took off her top to display the lovely curves of her back. Her milky skin was a sight to behold, a rare beauty indeed.



Dustin regained his composure and applied the medication to the bruises on her back. Then, he gave her a slow and soft massage.

“Ouch...” He seemed to have touched a sore area as she frowned and inhaled deeply.

“Just bear with it. I’ll be done in a while.” During the massage, he channeled some internal energy to clear up the blood clots. Soon, she felt the pain in her back go away, and her body was basking in a comfortable and warm sensation.

“Dear! I’m here!” They heard a singsong voice from the entrance. In the next moment, they found themselves staring blankly at Natasha and Caitlyn, who were standing quietly at the door with the fresh groceries in their hands.

“I saw nothing!” Caitlyn covered her face and turned around, her cheeks flushed in

embarrassment.

“What are you doing?” Natasha’s expression hardened, and her eyes filled with accusation. She was looking at a man and a woman in a room. The woman was stripped down to her

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undergarments, and the man was running his hand all over her. It looked suspicious no matter

what.

“Ahem, please ignore that. Dahlia has been injured, and I was applying some medication for her,” Dustin hastily explained himself, but he felt oddly guilty in doing so.

“Applying medication?” Natasha was green in envy as she scanned Dahlia from head to toe. “And does she need to take off her clothes for that? Do you need to sit close to each other? Look at you- you can’t even take your hands off her!”

“Eh?” Dustin turned around and saw his hands on Dahlia, and he immediately retracted his hands in shock. He believed his intention was pure, but why did he feel guilty after Natasha’s interrogation?

“Caitlyn, come take a look. I look like the bad guy now, don’t I?” Natasha asked with a straight face.

“Um, what? What’s going on?” Caitlyn was taken aback and baffled.

“Can’t you see? I’ve become a cuckquean!” Natasha crossed her arms over her chest and scoffed. Hmph! Dustin Rhys, why don’t you change your name instead? You should call yourself—Don Juan!”

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“Don Juan?” Dustin’s lips twitched in disbelief. What was going on? Why did he get labeled as a playboy just for applying some medication to his patient?

“Ms. Harmon, there’s a misunderstanding here. He’s in fact applying the medication to my injuries. “Dahlia could not suppress a tiny smile at the jealousy on Natasha’s face.

“Well, if you don’t trust my words, there’s nothing I can do about it.” Then, she slowly put on her clothes with a taunting look in her eyes.

“Hmph! I need some medication too!” Natasha sat down beside Dustin and started unbuttoning her clothes.

“Hey, what are you doing!” Shocked, he immediately stopped her.

She gave him a look of displeasure. “What? You can apply medication for her, but not for me?”

“That’s because you’re not hurt!” Dustin was helpless in the face of the young lady from a wealthy family who was acting like a child.

“Who said so? I am hurt in the heart, and it’s much worse than what she’s going through! Just touch it, and you’ll know!” A defiant Natasha puffed her chest, inviting him to touch it.

“Dustin, I feel some pain in the back. Can you apply more medication to it?” Dahlia did not back down and took off her top once more.

However, Dustin was suffering from a raging headache in the face of the two difficult beauties. They had always been passive—aggressive with each other every time they crossed paths, and it was tough to pacify them.

“Caitlyn! Help them out! I’ll get lunch ready!” His eyes lit up at the sight of his trusty assistant, and he grabbed the groceries from her hands and slid into the kitchen. One way of avoiding trouble was by escaping the scene.

“Hmph!” The women glared at each other and put on their clothes, finally putting the animosity to a temporary rest.

After a busy time in the kitchen, he served everyone a sumptuous lunch. It was a four-course dish with soup that smelled good and tasted equally great.

“Dear, have some grilled ribs. Look at you—you lost some weight!” Smiling, Natasha placed a piece of rib on his plate. He cautiously thanked her and quickly stuffed it into his mouth with a smile.

“What’s good about ribs? You should try some chicken Alfredo. I know you like this the best.” Dahlia, not backing down, placed the chicken on his plate.

“Grilled ribs are better, in my opinion. They’re succulent and chewy at the same time. Great

texture!” While speaking, Natasha put a second piece of rib on Dustin’s plate.

“To each his own! Dustin never gets tired of chicken Alfredo. You can’t compare it to ribs.” Dahlia flashed a faint smile and piled a piece of chicken on the growing hill of food on Dustin’s plate.

“Ribs are better!”

“The chicken Alfredo is nicer!”

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“Ribs!”

“Chicken!”

The women kept piling food on his plate while squabbling with barely concealed hostility. Soon, the lunch he prepared was gone, all going into his plate that was overflowing with food. He did not know where to get started.

Meanwhile, Caitlyn stared at the fight before her helplessly. She wanted to take her share of the meat, but she lost the chance to do so.

“Dustin, my darling, is the chicken or rib better?” After the fight, the women turned their sharp gazes onto him and directed the question to him. The scene was like déjà vu, but this time, it was more frightening.

“They’re both great!” He flashed a bitter smile and answered.

“No! You can only pick one!” They glared at him with a threatening air.

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“I can’t pick! They taste different, and the choice will depend on the time, the place, and the preference of the person.” Dustin bit the bullet and offered a neutral opinion.

“Hmph! You’re really good at talking yourself out of situations!” Dahlia rolled her eyes, but at least she stopped bugging him.

“No matter what, you have to pick the ribs!” However, Natasha was more aggressive, supported by the confidence that she had Dustin wrapped around her finger. He could only smile without saying a word as he was drenched in cold sweat.

“Dear, come with me. I have something to discuss with you.” After the heart-stopping lunch, Dustin was called to the side to talk by Natasha.

Dahlia pretended that she was out for a casual stroll to eavesdrop. However, Natasha immediately noticed her plans and dragged Dustin into her car, keeping everyone out of their private

discussion.

“Natasha, what do you want to discuss?” He was curious.

Natasha suddenly announced, “I’ll be honest with you— I might need to leave Swinton for a while.”

“Leaving Swinton? Where to?” He was taken aback,

“I’m going to my hometown in Millsburg.” Her expression dimmed at the thought. “I have some family matters to tend to. And I need to take care of it right away.”

“What’s the important matter? Do you need my help?” He prodded cautiously. He knew that it must be a complicated matter because he rarely saw Natasha with a solemn face.

“It’s fine. Just a private matter. I can take care of it myself.” She squeezed a smile at him. She wanted to tell him the truth very badly, but she couldn’t do so. Despite Dustin’s outstanding martial arts skills, he was far from being able to take down the Grant Family.

As one of The Tremendous Three, the Grants were influential across the military, the government, and the business scene. One could say that they were invincible in the Southern province.

A single individual could never fight against a top dog like the Grants, and the last thing she wanted was to get him involved in the mess.

“Natasha, you must let me know if you are in trouble. Don’t put on a brave face and pretend that everything’s fine,” he assured her with a serious face.

“Don’t worry. I know what to do.” She beamed at him, looking relieved. It was worth taking the huge risk on her own after seeing him get nervous for her.

“How long do you plan to stay in Millsburg?” He asked her.

“I’m not sure. It could be as quick as three days, or as long as seven days.”

“Cool. I will call you in three days. If you haven’t settled the issue, I will head over to help.” He was being serious.

“No, it’s fine.” She shook her head and rejected his offer. But he cut her off and insisted. “You don’t have a say this time! Just listen to me!”

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“Alright.” She gave him a helpless nod, but her heart was bursting with joy.

At that moment, someone rapped on the car window. It was Dahlia, standing out there with a hostile look in her eyes. “What are you talking about? Are you not done yet? Shall I serve you tea?”

Dustin coughed awkwardly and smiled. “I’ll get out now.” Then, he opened the door to leave.

“Wait!” Natasha suddenly reached out and wrapped an arm around his neck. Then, she gave him a kiss with her red lips.

He let out a muffled moan and tasted the sweetness whirling in his mouth. His body stiffened, and his mind went blank. Did she pull the same trick again? This time, she was more bold and

passionate.

“You-

” Dahlia glared at them and dragged Dustin out of the car. Feeling humiliated and angered, she yelled, “Natasha Harmon, what are you doing?”

“Not bad. He’s getting better at kissing.” Natasha licked her red lips, looking as though she wanted more. Flashing a suggestive smile, she said to Dustin, “Stay home while I’m gone. I’ll be back in two days for you.”

With that, she stamped on the accelerator and sped away.

“She’s shameless!” Dahlia stomped furiously. Too bad she could never get herself to imitate Natasha’s coy behavior.

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As night descended, there was a commotion at the Nicholson Villa as the entrance door was busted down. Then, Gloria and her bodyguards from the Nicholson Family barged in pompously. Two men, who were more than six feet tall, were eye-

catching. The two guards shared some resemblance, and the muscles on their bodies were chiseled like rock cliffs. They stood there like two huge mountains that evoked fear.

“Dahlia Nicholson! Get out right now!” Gloria yelled at the top of her lungs when she stepped *foot* in the house. Her face was still bruised from Dustin’s beating in the morning, looking terrifying, especially with the awful scowl.

“Oh! If it isn’t Madam Gloria? What brings you here?” Florence emerged from the kitchen but jumped at the sight of the entourage.

“I’m asking you now. Where are Dahlia and Dustin?” Gloria hissed through gritted teeth.

“They haven’t been back since the morning. I have no idea where they went!” Florence replied

meekly.

“You have no idea? Are you trying to hide them?!” A woman with a bandaged face made her way

out of the crowd.

Florence was taken aback by the figure, whom she failed to recognize. "Um, who are you?"

"I'm Dakota!" The woman in bandages yelled.

"Oh, it's Dakota! What happened to your face? How did you get injured this badly?" Florence was

shocked

by the extent of Dakota's injuries. One couldn't tell her nose apart from her mouth, and it was harder to recognize her as she was all wrapped up in bandages.

"How dare you ask me that question? It's all thanks to your dearest daughter and son-in-law! They made me look like this!" Dakota grimaced. She was born pretty and used her looks to her

advantage, given that she was relatively talentless in other fields.

However, Dustin destroyed her face with all the kicking and beating. It was not surprising that she would be infuriated.

"What? Did they beat you up? That can't be true!" Florence gasped in disbelief.

"I am not the only victim. They also hurt Grandma! We must use the house law on those two treacherous jerks!" Dakota yelled again.

"Florence, get them here, or I'll make you regret it!" Gloria grew impatient.

"Madam Gloria, I have nothing to do with it! I really don't know where they went!" Looking nervous, Florence added, "My daughter is kind and innocent. She can't possibly hit anyone! I think this must be Dustin's doing. Just arrest him if you want!"

"Hmph! You and your sweet words! I want her slapped!" Gloria roared with rage.

"Yes, Madam!" The elderly servants that came with Gloria immediately went up and pinned Florence down. The biggest of them all slapped Florence hard on the face until she was seeing stars and bleeding from the nose.



“How dare you beat my mom? I’m not going easy on you!” James, who had descended the stairs, was furious at the sight and dashed over while yelling.

“Cougar!” Gloria gave one bulky bodyguard a look, and he went up to grab James by the collar, lifting the poor dude into the air like he was a puppy.

“Ugh...” James’ face turned a deep shade of red as he was suffocated. He struggled for his life, but he couldn’t free himself.

“Let go of my son!” A worried Florence butted against the elderly servants, grabbed a fruit knife from the table, and plunged it into Cougar’s abdomen.

They all heard a tiny clanking sound, but Cougar remained standing. The blade in Florence’s hand

broke into two.

“What?” She stared blankly at the knife.