

## An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 2

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### Chapter 2

In the elevator, Dustin stared at the crystal necklace dejectedly. Even though he had expected it, he was still sad that his marriage had ended just like that. He had once thought that happiness was simple: meals on the table, cheerful days, and simple pleasures. Now, he found out that normalcy was a sin. It was time to awaken from this prolonged daydream.

Suddenly, his phone rang, breaking him out of his trance. When he picked up the phone, a familiar voice came from the other end.

“Mr. Rhys, I’m Hunter Anderson from the Swinton Group. I heard that today your wedding anniversary with Ms. Nicholson, so I’ve prepared a gift for you. I’m just wondering if you have any time today?”

“Thank you for your kindness, but I’m afraid we won’t be needing the gift,” Dustin said.

“Why?”

Hunter was taken aback. He could sense something wrong.

“Is there anything else you’d like to talk about, Mr. Anderson?”

“Actually, yes, there is.” Hunter cleared his throat awkwardly. “I’ve got a friend who contracted a strange illness. He’s seen a lot of doctors, but none of them could do anything about it. I was hoping that you could help.”

“Mr. Anderson, you know my rules.”

“Of course I do! I’m sincere in my request. My friend owns some canscora, which I remember you were looking for. I’m sure he’ll be willing to part with it if you help him,” Hunter said.

“Is this true?” Dustin asked seriously.

“Yes, it is!”

“Alright, if that’s so, then I’ll be willing to take a look.” Dustin immediately agreed to the request.

He wasn't interested in money or jewels, but rather some rare herbs and plants, as he needed them to save lives.

"Thank you, Mr. Rhys! I'll send someone to pick you up immediately!" Hunter smiled in relief.

As the president of the Swinton Group and one of the Mighty Three of Swinton, Hunter acted exceptionally timid in front of Dustin.

"Great, one more down, five to go. I should have enough time," Dustin muttered to himself. His mood was lifted a little by this news.

With a ding, the elevator doors opened. As soon as he stepped out of the building, he saw two familiar figures walking toward him. It was Dahlia's mother, Florence Franklin, and her brother, James Nicholson.

"Mom, James, why are you here?" Dustin greeted.

"Did you and Dahlia get divorced?" Florence did not waste any breath.

"Yes, we did." Dustin gave her a forced smile. "It's not Dahlia's fault, it's mine. Don't blame her."

He intended to end his marriage on a pleasant note. However, hearing this, Florence snorted coldly.

"Of course it's your problem. I know my daughter well. If you hadn't done anything wrong, why would she divorce you?"

Dustin was stunned. What was this? Victim blaming?

"Mom, you know how I've treated her over the past three years. I'm pretty sure I'm never done anything to betray Dahlia's trust in me," Dustin said.

"Who knows what you've done behind our backs?" Florence snorted again. "My daughter was right to divorce you! Look at yourself. She's clearly out of your league!"

"Mom, don't you think you're going too far?" Dustin frowned.

If he hadn't helped the Nicholson family three years ago, they wouldn't be where they were today.

“Too far? So what if I am? Am I not speaking the truth?” Florence crossed her arms.

“That’s enough, Mom, stop wasting time with him.” Suddenly, James stepped forward. “Listen here, Rhys. I don’t care whether you divorce my sister or not, but you’re giving me all the money you got from her.”

“Money? What money?” Dustin was flabbergasted.

“Stop feigning ignorance! I know that my sister gave you eight million dollars as alimony!” James said coldly.

“That’s right! That’s my daughter’s money. You have no right to take it! Give it back!” Florence stretched out her hand in demand.

“I didn’t take any money from her,” Dustin denied.

“Bullshit! Who would pass on eight million dollars? Do you take us as idiots?” James did not believe him.

“Rhys, you’d better be tactful and give us the money. Don’t make me angry!” Florence warned.

“You can call Dahlia and ask her if you don’t believe me.” Dustin did not wish to explain himself any further.

“What now? Are you threatening us? Listen here. No matter how much you beg, I’m not letting you leave with a single cent of ours!” Florence snarled.

“Mom, he’s too dense for this. Let’s just search his pockets!” James said impatiently. He dove straight into Dustin’s pockets.

Florence followed suit.

“Mom, do you have to do this?” Dustin frowned.

He hadn’t expected to be accosted by the Nicholson family so soon after the divorce. They were really merciless.

Florence spat on the ground in disgust.

“Who are you calling Mom? Watch your mouth. Who do you think you are?” As she spoke, she continued searching through Dustin’s pockets.

After some time, they didn't find what they wanted from his pockets.

"F\*cking hell, did he really not take any of the money?" James said, displeased.

Suddenly, he spied the crystal necklace around Dustin's necklace and pulled it off roughly.

"Isn't this my sister's necklace? Why is it with you? Did you steal it?" James demanded.

"This is the Rhys family heirloom. Give it back!" Dustin said, his expression darkening.

He wouldn't take any money, but he would not leave his mother's keepsake.

"A family heirloom? Does this mean that this is valuable?" James' eyes lit up.

"In that case, Rhys, this can be your repayment for these three years that you've been living with us. Let's go!" Florence gave her son a look and prepared to leave.

"Stop there!" Dustin grabbed James' wrist. "Give me back the necklace!"

"Ouch! That hurts! Let me go!" James felt great pain in his wrist.

"Give it back," Dustin repeated dangerously.

"F\*ck, I'd rather throw it away than give it back to you!"

Seeing that he had no chance of freeing himself from Dustin, James threw the necklace onto the ground. With a crisp clink, the crystal necklace broke into several pieces. Dustin blanched. This was the only thing he had to remember his mother by.

"How dare you lay your hands on me! I'd rather break it than give it back to you!" James said as he rubbed his sore wrist.

Dustin clenched his fists so tightly that his knuckles popped. His eyes were red with anger.

"You son of a b\*tch!" Unable to hold in his anger anymore, Dustin slapped James in the face.

James was slapped so hard that he spun back uncontrollably before falling to the ground. He was so dizzy that he couldn't stand up.

"Since your mother can't be bothered to teach you manners, then let me do the honors!" Dustin grabbed him by the hair and lifted him. Then, he slapped him several times.

James' face soon turned bloody from the slaps.

"How dare you hit my son!" Florence screamed as she tried to help her son.

"F\*ck off!" Dustin turned and glared at her. The glare was so intense that Florence froze in her tracks.