

An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori

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The doctors looked at each other in shock after seeing how lively Jane was. They couldn't believe that such a small pill had cured what a group of medical professionals had been unable to. It was incredible!

Was that black pill a panacea or something?

Getting over his shock, the bald doctor tentatively asked, "Ms. Nicholson, may I know what pill that is? Could we study it?"

"Yeah, right. Fuck off!" Dakota immediately kicked him, making the man groan in **pain**.

Knowing he had lost, he quickly led the other doctors out of the room in disappointment.

"Who knew a small pill like this could be so powerful?" Florence was in awe. Despite its looks and smell, its effects were evident.

"It may have cost ten million dollars, but it was worth it!" Dakota exclaimed happily.

"What? Ten million?" The other two women instantly sprung up.

"Are you joking. Dakota? A bottle like this costs ten million dollars? Florence asked, wide-eyed.

"Yeah! Were you tricked? How could this ordinary-looking medicine cost so much?" Jane demanded, pained. The richer someone was, the stingier they were.

"Forget it. As long as it could save you, the price isn't that important." Dakota wasn't too angry about it.

"What do you mean forget about it?" Jane fumed. "I still haven't gotten even with that brat for slapping me. How dare he con us out of ten million dollars! I have to get that money back!" She immediately tried to get out of bed, but her agitated state, combined with her weak body, made her knees go weak, and she immediately collapsed back on the bed.

"Mom, we can think about the money later. Your health is way more important," Dakota said worriedly.

"Don't worry, Jane. I'll get the money back for you." Florence volunteered, not letting the opportunity to prove herself escape.

"Alright, then. I'll leave this to you." Jane agreed without hesitation. She couldn't be happier that someone was volunteering to run errands for her.

"Mom, **bad** news!" Just then, Dahlia barged into the room anxiously.

"What's wrong?" Florence **was** puzzled since she rarely saw her daughter so panicked.

"It's James." Dahlia **panted** before continuing.

"I just received news that he got drunk last night and

accidentally **ran** his car into someone, killing that person. He's already been arrested!"

"He killed someone?" Florence **was** stunned. "How is that possible? He **never** drives after drinking. How could this have happened?"

"I don't know the specifics either.

He's being held in police custody. Let's go now." Dahlia urged.

"Right! Let's go!" Florence quickly followed Dahlia out of the room.

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Dahlia was the one who drove, and moments later, they arrived at the investigation bureau. After **a** simple

registration, the two women entered the meeting room and saw a roughed-up James.

"Mom! Sis! You're finally here!" James burst out crying the moment he saw them.

"You asshole! How **dare** you drink and drive!" Dahlia walked forward and slapped him across the face.

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"Enough. Stop fighting. Let us know what happened first." Florence said worriedly.

"I'm not sure what happened either." James sobbed. "I blacked out after drinking with my friends. By the time I

woke up, I was already in the car, and there was wreckage everywhere. I **was** so scared I ran away immediately, but I got caught the same night."

"You did a hit-and-run? Do you know how severe this crime is? You won't be getting out without a decade or

two of jail time!" Dahlia spat.

"What?" James immediately paled. "I'm still young. I don't want to go to jail. Please save me!"

"You have to pay the price for your mistakes. How can you think that you'll be safe after killing someone?"

Dahlia sighed. Although she loved her brother dearly, she could do nothing about his crime.

"Sis, Mom, help me! I swear I'll never do this again! I've learned my lesson, I swear!" James swore frantically, unable to stand the thought of living out his life in prison.

“Calm down, James. I’ll call you aunt right now. With the Glenstead Nicholson’s help and some money, we

should be able to get your out.” Florence quickly drew out her **phone** and called Jane. “Hello? Jane? James is in danger. He ran his car into somebody and killed them. Could you make a few calls to get him out?”

“It’s not that I don’t want to help you, Florence, but Dahlia ran away from her date last night, so our family is very unhappy. They’ve given the order that unless Dahlia marries Mr. Longford, our family will not be providing any assistance,” Jane responded calmly.

“What?” Florence stiffened and turned to look at Dahlia questioningly.

“I’ll never marry him!” Dahlia immediately refused.

“Then forget about it. Deal with James on your own.” Jane hung up.

“Just agree, Dahlia. What’s wrong with marrying Mr. Langford? He’s powerful and rich, and he comes from an aristocratic family. As long as you marry him, we can save your brother and live comfortably for the rest of our

lives.” Florence urged.

“Mom, I don’t like him!” Dahlia frowned.

“You’ll fall in love with him after some time. Would you rather see your brother being sent to prison?” Florence

wailed.

“That’s right, Sis. Just marry Mr. Langford, or I’m doomed!” James sobbed.

“Did the two of you ever think of my future?” Dahlia was troubled.

“You’ll have a wonderful life if you marry Mr. Langford, and our family will become powerful too, What’s not to like about that? Besides, I’m your brother. Do **y**ou want to see me rot away in jail?” James roared, his **eyes**

bloodshot.

“Let me think about it. T— there must be another **way**.” Dahlia shut her eyes helplessly.

“What’s there to think about? We’re running out of time.” James shouted frantically.

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“He’s right. Won’t you please help him? I’m begging you!” Florence cried and fell to her knees.

“What are you doing, Mom? Get up!” Dahlia paled and tried to help Florence stand.

“I won’t get up until you agree!” Florence declared.

At the sight of her mother’s firm attitude and her brother’s terrified expression, Dahlia stood rooted dumbly, **at** a loss. She never thought that things would turn out this way. The happiness she’d been praying for was just

a few steps ahead, so why was God treating her this way? Didn’t she deserve happiness?

“Fine. I’ll do it ...” Dahlia shut her eyes, tears spilling down her cheeks.

She had given in..

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“Fine. I’ll do it...”

Within an exclusive club, Luis couldn’t help grinning when he heard the other voice from the phone. “Great. See you tonight. You better not stand me up again.”

With that, he hung up. The young men and women surrounding him immediately gave him a thumbs-up after learning what had happened.

“Never thought a tiny trick like this could get that chick to obey you, Ms. Langford. You’re incredible!” a blond man praised.

Luis chuckled evilly. “She would never have agreed if I hadn’t sent her brother in. Besides, how could I let a chick like her slip through my fingers like that?”

None of the women he set his sights on have ever gotten away from him. All it took was some time and some tricks. Dahlia may look like an innocent woman, but as long as he used her friends and family as bait, she would surely bite.

“I’m curious, Mr. Langford. Why would you marry her? You could have just had fun without getting married. This doesn’t seem like something you’d do.” The blond man observed.

“Excellent question.” Luis paused to light a cigar. “Truthfully, what I want is the Glenstead Nicholsons’ support. Marriage between our families has been set, and Dahlia will soon carry out her family’s orders. Through her, I will take over the Nicholsons’ power completely!”

His words caused a stir among the crowd, and they immediately began singing his praises.

“As expected of Mr. Langford, he thinks so far ahead. How impressive!”

“He has brains and brawn. He’s amazing!”

“Once I take over the Nicholsons, I will become the head of the Langfords!” Luis declared confidently.

Competition between him and his brothers was fierce, **as** everyone wanted to become the head of the family. To win against them, he must have enough strength and power.

“Then let us wish you a happy marriage in advance!” The blond man led the group to offer Luis a toast. Soon, laughter resonated through the room.

8 pm at Hillview Restaurant.

Dustin had arrived earlier than the agreed time. He had chosen the most luxurious room they had to cater to him and Dahlia, which didn’t matter much to him since this **was** one of his businesses, and he didn’t have to

pay.

“Sir, our chef prepared these dishes specially for **you**. Please let us know what you think.” The manager, carrying a menu, began to introduce each dish to Dustin.

“No need for all this. You can arrange it as you see fit. Just make sure to get us the chef’s signature dish,”

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Dustin instructed.

“Of course, sir.” The manager nodded and waved his hand to those outside the room.

A group of waiters immediately began setting up the place with flowers, wine, candles, and more, making the room look romantic and warm. They had even hired a guitarist and three dancers to perform. Soon, everything was ready.

“Sir, I took the liberty to arrange some performers. I hope you don’t mind.” the manager said with a smile.

“This looks quite grand. You must have put in a lot of effort.” Dustin was surprised.

“I can always tell them to leave if you don’t wish them to be here.” The manager lowered his head.

“It’s fine. It’s quite nice. Thank you.” Dustin smiled.

Dahlia would like this, wouldn’t she?

“It’s my pleasure to serve you, sir. May I know when Ms. Nicholson will be arriving so I can prepare things?” the manager asked tentatively.

“She should be here soon.” Dustin glanced at the time. It was already past eight..

Dahlia always kept her promise and was never late. Did something happen?

Puzzled, Dustin pulled out his phone to call her.

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Dahlia didn't pick up the first two times. It wasn't until his third attempt that the call got through.

"Hey, Dahlia. Didn't you tell me to treat you to dinner? Why aren't you here yet?" Dustin asked.

"About that I'm sorry, but something came up. I might not be able to leave any time soon." Dahlia's voice sounded strange.

"It's alright. Work is more important. Take your time. I won't bother you." Dustin answered understandingly despite the tinge of regret.

Dahlia hummed. "I'll treat you another day."

"Sure." Dustin smiled. He was just about to hang up when he heard a familiar voice.

"Dahlia, who are you calling? Hurry up. You've got to drink with me--"

With a beep, the call ended.

"Sir, when is Ms. Nicholson arriving?" the manager asked.

"She has something to deal with, so she can't come. You can put everything away. I'm sorry, everyone." Dustin smiled politely and got up to leave.

Everyone exchanged confused glances. Why had the carefully planned dinner gone to waste?

Meanwhile, inside a Barkarole Hotel room.

"Mr. Langford, I can't drink anymore. Let's stop here tonight." Dahlia waved her hands frantically as another

glass of wine came towards her.

Her face was flushed, and she was light-headed, her body weak.

"It was quite hard to get your brother out of that mess. You can't be that ungrateful, can you?" Luis held up his

glass unhappily.

"Just drink it, Dahlia. It's just one glass." Florence, who was sitting beside them, urged.

They were **here** because they wanted to save James, so they had to make sure they pleased Luis.

"But – Dahlia hesitated, troubled. **Knowing** her limits, **she** was sure she'd collapse if she **drank** anymore.

"I won't force you anymore, Dahlia. This is the last **glass**." Luis pushed the glass towards her once more.

"See, **Dahlia?** It's the last glass. You shouldn't embarrass him." Florence pressed softly.

"Alright, I'll drink it." Taking a deep breath, Dahlia lifted the glass to her lips and downed the entire thing. As soon as the liquid settled, she felt herself getting dizzy. Her body swayed, and she almost tripped.

With quick reflexes, Florence grabbed Dahlia to keep her still. "Mr. Langford, Dahlia is drunk. Why don't I send

her home."

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"It's fine. I've already booked a presidential suite for the two of you. She can just rest here." Luis said with a smile.

"Won't that be too much trouble?" Florence questioned tentatively.

"Of course not. We'll be a family soon. You should go and rest." Luis drew out a room card and passed it to Florence.

"Thank you, Mr. Langford." Florence nodded and helped Dahlia out of the room.

"Let's see how you're going to escape tonight." Luis cackled, seeing Dahlia's retreating figure. He lifted his glass and took a big gulp before following behind the two women.

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Inside the presidential suite, Florence helped Dahlia onto the bed and took off the younger woman's shoes. She then went to grab a basin of warm water to wipe Dahlia down.

"Mom, I feel horrible. I want some water." Dahlia lay on the bed weakly, feeling parched.

"Water won't work. I'll get you some milk. Wait here." Florence made up an excuse and quickly left the room, bumping into Luis straight away.

"How's Dahlia doing. Mrs. Nicholson?"

"She's fine. Nothing a night's sleep won't fix. Florence smiled.

"Where are you heading, Mrs. Nicholson?" Luis asked again.

"To get Dahlia some milk to ease her stomach ache."

"I see..." Luis smiled knowingly. "No one sells milk nearby, so I'm afraid you'll have to search further. You might have to come back later too."

"Are you sure? I'm pretty sure I saw a grocery store downstairs." Florence smiled awkwardly.

"Are you questioning me?" Luis' smile slowly disappeared, an animalistic, cruel expression taking over.

"Of course not. Got it. I'll come back later." Florence promised hurriedly, smiling apologetically.

"Good." Luis' smile returned, and he watched the woman leave. As soon as she was gone, he opened the room door and let himself in.

"How did you get the milk so quickly, Mom?" Dahlia asked weakly from the bed.

"Your mother isn't coming back anytime soon, so I'll be taking care of you," Luis responded.

"Mr. Langford? What are you doing here?" Dahlia's face tightened. "How did you get in? Where's my mom?"

"She went to get you some milk, of course," Luis answered, beginning to take his clothes off.

"What do you think you're doing. Mr. Langford?" Dahlia began to panic.

"What do you think is supposed to happen when a man and a woman are left alone in a room?" He sneered, removing his tie, eyes full of lust.

"Don't mess with me, Mr. Langford. I'm not that kind of person!" Dahlia shouted.

"We'll be engaged in a few days and getting married **soon**, so what does it matter? Luis jeered. "I promise you Infinite luxury if you **please** me tonight."

"No! You're not touching me until we're married!" Dahlia **stood** her ground.

"That'll take too long. You're going to sate me right now!" He lunged forward and began yanking **at** her clothes like a beast.

"Go away!" Struggling with all her might, Dahlia planted a firm kick at Luis' groin, and the man immediately

doubled, groaning. "Are you alright, Mr. Langford?" Dahlia was startled. Things would be bad if she caused him permanent injury down there.

"You b*tch!" Furious, Luis slapped Dahlia across the face, making her stagger and fall to the floor. "No woman has ever rejected me, much **less** kicked me. How dare you!" Luis exploded.

"I'm sorry. Mr. Langford. I didn't do that on purpose." Dahlia shook her head.

"Shut the f*ck up! If you don't want something to happen to your brother, you better kneel and beg for forgiveness!"

"You're crossing the line, Mr. Langford!" Dahlia snapped.