

## An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 201 -

Chapter 201

“James, I’m giving you three seconds to apologize to Caitlyn!”

Dustin slowly got to his feet, his expression dark.

“Apologize? Who the f\*ck do you think you are? As if I’m going to apologize just because you asked me to. Not to mention, isn’t she just a stupid b\*tch? So what if I hit her? What are you doing to do about it? If you’re going to keep yapping at me, I might even hit you too!” James yelled; his expression was ferocious.

“You dimwitted fool!” Dustin snorted humorlessly, launching a kick at James’ abdomen.

The latter let out a pained cry as he flew a few feet backward. His entire body was curled up into a ball as he rolled backward.

At first, Florence was utterly dumbfounded. Then, her eyes flared with rage, screaming as she pounced at him.” How dare you hit my son?! You **ruthless** animal, I’m going to teach you a lesson!”

She started to scratch and hit him, throwing out moves like it **was a** catfight.

“Get off!”

Dustin’s body shook, and an invisible force pushed Florence to stagger backward.

In the end, she lost her balance, falling onto her bottom with an “ouch”. Her head banged against the door.

“You horrible piece of shit! How dare you hit me too? This is wrong. This is all wrong! How did our family

raise

such an ungrateful bastard like you?!” Florence sobbed, seated on the floor.

After watching his mother fall, James immediately shouted furiously, “What are you all doing just standing

there? Get him!”

The thugs suddenly woke up from their daze. They instantly brandished their steel pipes and charged toward

Dustin, roaring.

However, in the next second, they were all sent flying out of the medical center, screaming.

“Fuck, you’re all useless!” James shouted, disappointed to the point of fury.

He thought that by bringing thugs over, he could get the upper hand in the battle. He **never** thought that the

thugs he hired would be so useless.

Suddenly, Dustin **spoke** up, “Caitlyn, he slapped you just now, so you can give him two slaps in return.”

“Don’t you dare!” James’ expression was demonic.

Caitlyn seemed frozen in fear. She shrank in on herself, not daring to **step** forward.

All her life, she had only been beaten—she **had** never hit **someone** else before.

“If she doesn’t **dare**, I’ll do it for her then!”

Without another **word**, **Dustin** slapped James hard in the face two times. The latter was dazed from the blows,

and his cheeks grew red and puffy.

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“You savage, you’re even lower than an animal! Did you **just** smack your former brother-in-law over a stupid

beggar? Are you even human?! Our family has done so much for you, but not only do you not know how to repay us, you choose to bite the hand that fed you!

“You’re truly heartless! No wonder my daughter wanted to divorce you. Because of your ungrateful character, you deserve to die alone! You petty, immoral, and hopeless piece of trash, you’ll never compare to Matt!” Florence screamed, pointing her finger at Dustin’s nose.

She **was** showing her true colors as a wicked shrew.

“The Nicholson family has done so much for me? I’m being ungrateful?” Dustin couldn’t hold back his laughter

at her ridiculous words.

“Why does that sound so funny coming from your mouth? When you say you did so much for me who do you think helped you get to where you are today? Ever since Dahlia started her company three years ago, it’s only been smooth sailing and successful; who do you think helped her out behind the scenes?

“Trevor’s revenge, the Harmon family’s partners, James being detained at the bar, Dahlia running into danger, and also getting rid of the Hummers’ boycott who do you think took care of these things? It was me! When you say you’ve done a lot for me, it’s me who’s done a lot for the Nicholson family! But how did you all repay me? By verbally abusing me and framing me. Let me ask you this, who’s the ungrateful one?!” Dustin spoke in a booming voice.

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Dustin finally let out the grievances that he had bottled up for a long time.

“You...

... That’s bullshit!” Florence did not believe it in the slightest.

Her tone grew **even** shriller as she screamed, “As if you had the capability to help us! My daughter’s achievements today are all thanks to her **own** excellence! It has nothing to do with you! Also, don’t think you’re all that. You had to rely on a woman to climb your way up to where you are today! If Ms. Harmon hadn’t protected you, the Hummers would have slaughtered you long ago! So don’t feel too happy now. Ms. Harmon will kick a useless gigolo like you to the curb sooner or later. And when the time comes, you’ll become the public enemy!”

Hearing these words, Dustin simply shook his head and laughed.

Sure enough, there was no point in saying all those things. These people wouldn’t believe it at all.

In the Nicholson family’s eyes, he had always been nothing but an incompetent average Joe.

Of course, he didn’t care.

“Alright. I don’t want to waste my breath with you anymore. Please leave the medical center right now. You are not welcome here!” Dustin said, leaving no room for their bullshit.

“Just you f\*cking wait! This is not over! James bellowed. Then, he helped Florence into the car and left.

He couldn’t beat him in a fight, so he could only think of another way.

“Caitlyn, are you okay?” Dustin asked with concern.

“I’m fine. I’m sorry for causing trouble for you, Mr. Rhys.” Caitlyn looked **ashamed**.

“You silly girl, if you encounter this again in the future, run far away and hide. Don’t try to act tough,” Dustin

admonished.

“Okay.” Caitlyn **nodded** her head with a sweet smile on her face.

In the evening, Dahlia returned to the Nicholson Villa after work. As soon as she stepped through the door, she

saw James' bruised face as well **as** Matt's stern one.

As soon as James saw her, he told her what happened. "Dahlia, you're finally home. Did you **know** that Mom

got **beaten** up?"

"Mom **was** beaten? What happened!?" Dahlia **was** shocked.

"It's a long story. **You** need to go to Mom's room and see her **as soon as** possible!" **James** urged.

Dahlia frowned and quickly went to Florence's room.

She found Florence lying on the bed, looking pallid.

Her head was wrapped in thick bandages, and her hands and feet were in casts.

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On the bedside table, there are several bloody towels. It was a scene from a nightmare.

"Mom, what happened to you? How did you get hurt so badly?" Dahlia was agghast.

"Dahlia, you're finally back. If you had come **any** later, I may not see you ever again..." She trailed off before erupting in a fake coughing fit.

"Mom, just what happened to you? Who did this to you?!" Dahlia's expression turned frosty.

"Ugh It was all because of that animal, Dustin! Your brother and I went to the Peaceful Medical Center today to ask him to help us write a formula, but not only did that animal refuse to help, he even spewed many offensive things. I got mad and told him off, but that savage was so ashamed that he flew into a rage and beat me and your brother up. I got lucky. Otherwise, I may not have been able to return!" Florence sighed, recounting the incident with a few embellishments.

“Dustin? He would never do that.” Dahlia’s eyes widened. She found it a little hard to believe.

The Dustin she knew was definitely not a vicious person.

“Dahlia, I know it’s hard for you to believe, but the truth is already in front of you. Look at Mom, and then look at my face. We were beaten to a pulp! That Rhys bastard is simply not human!” James whined indignantly.

“No, that can’t be. Was it some kind of misunderstanding?” Dahlia held onto the last glimmer of hope.

“Dahlia, things **have** already come to this. Don’t tell me you still want to defend that trash! Fine, since you don’t believe me, I’ll show you proof! This is a recording from my dashcam. You’ll know whether it’s true or not once you watch it,” James said, fishing out his phone from his pocket. He opened a video and pressed play. Dahlia focused on the screen. In an instant, she felt **as** though she’d been struck by lightning.

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The video on James’ phone showed Dustin getting violent.

First, he kicked James, then he pushed Florence aside, causing her to fall onto the floor and bang her head against the door.

Finally, it ended with Dustin slapping James twice.

The start and end of the video had been edited out, and there was no audio, only images.

After watching it. Dahlia was frozen.

She couldn’t believe it before, but the video was right here; she had to believe it.

“Dahlia, you saw what happened, right? This is proof that he beat us! Mom is already getting old; she can’t handle that piece of trash’s beatings! We already went to the hospital to get checked out. The doctor said that her concussion i

s so severe that she might develop Alzheimer's disease! Not to mention, she even broke a few bones. She'll have trouble looking after herself in the future. Dahlia, do you still want to believe such a savage?! "James spat through gritted teeth, looking downtrodden and furious.

"Why? Why would he do that?" Dahlia clenched her fists, and her face was pale.

Their relationship had just begun to improve. She was even considering marrying him.

But why did Dustin hit her mother?

Could he have lost all feelings?

"Dahlia, not only did that brute hit me, but he also framed Julie and sent her to jail!" Florence said gravely.

"What? Julie is in jail?" Dahlia's eyes grew wide.

"That's right! Today, Julie went to the Harmons' to buy Immortunol and got into a disagreement with Dustin. Then, that bastard wanted to take revenge, so he got someone to arrest Julie and charge her with theft." James said venomously.

"I was there the whole time. I can vouch for it," Matt chimed in from the side.

Naturally, he wouldn't give up an opportunity to kick a man while he **was** down.

"Dahlia, did you hear that? That **bastard**, Dustin, is an ungrateful son-of-a-b\*tch. We were all fooled by him back then. He **has** already shown **his true** colors now, and he does not want to forgive and forget. How can you trust a man like him?!" Florence added, stoking the flames. As she spoke, she began to cough again.

She looked like she **was** at death's door, and Dahlia's heart clenched at the sight.

The last ray of hope in her heart was completely extinguished. **Instead**, it **was** replaced by fury!

Without another word, she took out her **phone** and dialed **Dustin's number**.

"Hello? I demand an explanation!"

"An explanation? For what?" Dustin responded calmly.

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"I'm **asking** you whether you were the one who beat my mother and James up?!" Dahlia asked, **suppressing**

her anger.

"I did hit James, but he deserved it. As for your mother, she caused her own f all by accident."

"By accident?" Dahlia's voice rose sharply.

"You say it like it's nothing! Not only did your **so-** called accident cause my mother to break her hands and legs, she even suffered a severe concussion!"

"Is it that serious?" Dustin was suspicious of that claim.

She's lying in bed, unable to move due to her injuries. Do **you** think that's not serious? According to your logic, does my mother have to die on the spot for her injuries to be serious? Are you even human?' Dahlia's blood was boiling.

"You'd better calm down and take your mother to have her injuries examined," Dustin said.

When Florence left earlier, she had been fine. There was no way she was this badly injured all of a sudden.

"Have her examined for what? I've already seen it with my own eyes, so why do I need to get her checked out? Are you still trying to justify yourself at this point?" Dahlia said, fuming.

He had beaten up her family. Now, not only was he refusing to apologize, but he was also acting **so**



righteously.

When did he become so unreasonable?

“Since you believe your mother’s story, then why are you asking me?” Dustin’s tone grew cold.

“What? Are you throwing in the towel just because you’ve been caught? You’re the one who beat them up; are you saying you were in the right?” Dahlia said.

“Fine. Let’s say I did beat them up, but did you ever ask why?” Dustin said.

“Of course, I asked! My mother asked you for the **formula**; not only did you refuse, you even said some harsh things. She told you off, and then you beat her up. Isn’t that what happened?!”

“Heh If that’s what you think happened, then that’s what happened.” Dustin smirked.

The current him was too lazy to explain. No matter what he said, they wouldn’t believe him.

“Dustin, ch, Dustin. I really didn’t expect you to be this kind of person! Did you have to go that far over a formula? What would have **happened** if you’d **given** her the recipe? Would you lose a limb? You know what, I can just pay for it! Is one million dollars enough? Or two? Name your price, and I’ll buy it no matter the amount!

Dahlia grew angrier and angrier as she spoke. Her hands started to tremble with rage.

“Do you think this is about **money**? To tell you the truth, I’ve already given the formula away.” Dustin stated indifferently.

“Who did you give it to? Was it Natasha? So are you saying that you would rather give her the formula for free

than sell it to me?”

“Can you be more reasonable?”

“Am I being unreasonable, or are you just a cold and heartless person who grew tired of your old toy in favor of a new one? Am I not even worth one formula in **your** eyes?!” Dahlia was about to lose her mind.

She wasn't this upset earlier, but at the thought of Natasha, she felt a knife pierce her heart.

She couldn't help but feel as if someone **had** taken something important from her.

“Dahlia, I don't want to argue with you. If you called me to talk about this, then I don't think we have anything to talk about,” Dustin said, taking a deep breath.

“Fine! Let's not talk about the formula—let's talk about Julie! Were you responsible for her arrest?” Dahlia changed the subject.

“If I said no, would you believe me?” Dustin said indifferently.

“Do you think I would believe you? Matt saw you plant fake evidence with his own eyes and got Julie sent to jail! I know you don't like her, but must you be so petty? How could you do such a cruel thing over a small conflict? That's my cousin! How could you do such a horrible thing?!” Dahlia was practically roaring by the

end of **the** sentence.

“So you'll believe whatever Matt says? Am I such a narrow-minded asshole in your eyes that you'd rather believe Matt over me?” Dustin asked, his eyebrows knitting together.

“You've done **so** many terrible things. How can I believe you?” Dahlia retorted back.

When Dustin heard those words, he fell silent, his mouth curving into a self-deprecating smile. He didn't want to explain further, nor did he have the energy to do so.

Once the **seeds** of doubt were planted, they could never be **removed**.

There had **always** been a chasm between him and Dahlia. It was due to a lack of trust.

No matter what he did or **said**, he would never receive an acknowledgment. But whenever there was a minor misunderstanding, it would explode into a full-**blown** argument.

That was the crux of their problems.

He had really done his best.

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“You don’t have anything else to say? I **knew** you were lying! Why? How did you turn out this way? Why do you have to push my boundaries over and over again? Must you keep causing trouble until we turn against each other? Dahlia’s face was full of disappointment, and she felt disheartened.

“It’s not that I’ve changed, but you’ve never believed in me, whether it was before or now. Since you won’t believe me anyway, then there’s nothing to talk about. I’ll figure out a way to repay you for what you did for Gregory.” As soon as Dustin finished speaking, he hung up.

Could things go back to the way they were before?

No, it was impossible.

This was his **answer** to her question last night.

“Dustin, what do you mean? Are you trying to cut ties with me? You ... Dahlia still had more to say, but the line had already gone dead.

Dustin’s indifference and coldness felt like a knife in her heart.

She couldn’t understand why the two of them couldn’t get along peacefully. **Why** must they hurt each other?

Why?

Why couldn't he try to understand her?

"Dahlia, I told you a long time ago that Dustin is inhuman. I'm sure you've seen his true self by now," James said, adding fuel to the fire.

"Dahlia, we won't go and beg him. That **animal** will get his reckoning sooner or later!" Florence added another

blow.

"Mom, don't talk anymore; just focus on getting better. I'll think of something to help Julie." Dahlia's mental

state was a mess.

"Dahlia, you don't have to worry too much. My father is already talking to his connections about Julie's arrest. I'm sure we'll hear something soon," Matt said comfortingly from the side.

A woman was most vulnerable when she was injured.

If he took advantage of this opportunity, she would be his soon.

"Thanks." Dahlia forced a smile.

While they were talking, a police car suddenly **stopped** at the entrance of the villa.

The car door opened, and Julie jumped off the car joyfully.

As soon as she stepped through the door, she hollered, "Aunt Florence, I'm back!"

"Julie?!"

When the others saw her, they all had looks of surprise.

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Florence even dropped **her** sickly act **and** leaped off the bed.

Grabbing Julie's hand, she looked her up and down with a worried face. "Julie, are you okay? Did you get hurt in there? Do you know how worried I was about you?"

"Aunt Florence, I'm fine. I was just locked up for half a day. I didn't get hurt." Julie smiled.

Although she **was** a little shaken up, she was glad to be back safe and sound.

"You were released after just half a day? That was quick" James said, a little flabbergasted.

"The situation was rather strange. When they interrogated me, they were so fierce and scary. **However**, after they got a phone call, **they** immediately released me," Julie said, sounding confused.

A light quickly went off in Florence's head. "Ah, I know! It must have been Matt's father who helped you. If it wasn't for Mr. Laney Sr.'s connections, you'd probably still be stuck in there."

"Really? Thank you so much, Matt!" Julie hurriedly thanked him.

"No, it was just a small favor. It was nothing." Matt faked a humble smile.

Although he said that, he thought the situation was weird, too. According to the plan, his father would only

help Julie after he got the formula for Immortunol.

So why had she been released so soon?

"See. Dahlia? This is the difference between Matt and Dustin! That Rhys bastard has no capabilities aside from using dirty tactics to get people in trouble! Then look at Matt—every time there's a critical moment, he always lends us a hand and saves the day! Now you should know which man cares about you the most," Florence said, purposely dragging one man **down** to lift the other **up**, showering Matt with praise.

\*Exactly, Dahlia! That loser is not good enough for you. Matt is still the best match for you. Since

you're already divorced, the way I see it, you should just get together with Mat t, James added.

"I don't want to talk about this right now."

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Dahlia frowned slightly, slowly coming back to her senses. Looking at Florence hop **around** e nergetically, she was astounded. "Mom, I thought you said you broke your hands and feet? How can you still stand?"

"Huh?" Florence's face froze, and she forced a smile. "When I saw Julie, I got a little too emotional and temporarily forgot about the pain. I should lie back down and get some rest right away."

With that, she limped to the bed.

But those horrible acting skills fooled no one.

"Mom, are you actually

actually fine and were just pretending to be hurt in front of me?!" Dahlia's face sank.

"How can I be fine? Didn't you see how Dustin hit me? Ouch held her head and began to put on a show again.

My head **is** starting to hurt again!" Florence

"You said you have a concussion and broken limbs. Well, where's the case file from the hospital? Show it to me!" Dahlia demanded.

"Well..." Florence and James both looked at each other, speechless.

Seeing their reaction, of course. Dahlia caught on.

"So you two have been lying to me all along? All for what?" She bit the bottom of her lip.

“Fine. I’m not hurt! So what? Seeing that her ruse was up, Florence stopped pretending.

She said indignantly, “Although I didn’t get hurt, **it’s** still true that that animal beat us up. You saw **what** happened in the **video**. Could that be faked?”

“That’s right! Dahlia, look at the injuries on my face. He did this to me!” James played along.

“Give me your phone!” Dahlia demanded, her gaze cold.

“W—what do you **want** my phone for?” James felt a niggling sense of guilt.

“Just give it to me!”

Without another word, Dahlia snatched the phone from his hands. She looked for the full video and played it with the volume turned up.

After grasping the entire situation, her body began to tremble from head to toe. She finally understood why her brother had been beaten up.

Dustin wasn’t the ungrateful one. It **was** her mother and brother who crossed the **line** and went to **his** doorstep to kick up a fuss!

“Why? Why did you guys lie to me?!” **Dahlia** was extremely upset.

“Dahlia, we didn’t lie **to you**. That animal **was** wrong to hit us. Even if we started it, he had no right to hit us back! So what if we hit him? We’re older than him; can’t we teach him a **lesson**?!” Florence argued righteously **as** if her actions were justified,

“You— you guys are really unbelievable!” **Dahlia** was furious. She didn’t expect that her mother would be so unreasonable and evil.

It was clearly her own fault, but she still pinned the blame on Dustin, deliberately twisting the truth and misleading her. 1

“Fine! Even if we were impulsive this time, it doesn’t mean that ass wasn’t responsible for this as well. If he hadn’t framed Julie, would we have gone over to pick a light? In the end, he had it coming for him!” Florence shouted with conviction, her hands on her waist.

As soon as she said that, a middle-aged man in uniform alighted from the police car that stopped in front of their door.

“You must be Julie Amberson’s family, am I right? I am Chief Aspen Cruiser. Regarding Julie’s case of medicine theft, although Mr.

Rhys has decided not to pursue

the matter, you still need to make sure she learned her lesson and won’t make the same mistake again. If Mr. Rhys hadn’t said anything today, Julie would probably have remained in there for a few more years. Do you understand?” Aspen said, giving them a stern verbal warning.

“Mr. Rhys?”

Florence and the others looked at each other. “Wasn’t it Mr. Laney Sr. who helped Julie?”

“Who’s that? I’ve never heard of him,” Aspen replied, stone-faced.

As soon as he said that, everyone’s eyes flicked over to Matt.

After everything that happened, it wasn’t even Phineas Laney who helped.

Then, had they thanked the wrong person?

Being on the receiving end of everyone’s gazes, Matt felt his face flush, as if he’d been slapped on both cheeks.

This **was** f\*cking humiliating!

“Chief Cruiser, may I ask who this ‘Mr. Rhys’ is that you’re talking about?” Florence still couldn’t believe it.

Aspen raised an eyebrow. “Who else could it be? Of course, it’s Dustin Rhys. Who else would help you out?”

As soon as he said that, the entire room fell **dead** silent...

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“D—

Dustin Rhys? How could it be him?!” After learning the truth, Florence and the others looked at each other for a while, disbelief written on their faces.



Never in a million years had they considered that it wasn't Matt who saved Julie, but the person they **had** dubbed ungrateful.

This was simply a slap in the face!

"So Dustin never framed Julie in the first place, and it was you guys purposely slinging mud at him?" Dahlia stood rooted to the ground, expressionless.

Her face was as white as a sheet.

"W—who slung mud at him? I bet he's feeling guilty because he knows what he did wrong, so he's trying to make things up to us!" Florence insisted stubbornly.

She was used to bossing people around; of course, she would never admit that she had gotten the wrong **idea**

about Dustin.

That would be too humiliating.

"Mom, things have already come to this, and you still want to justify yourself?" Dahlia bit her lip. Even her

heart **was** clenching.

"How am I justifying myself? If that Rhys bastard hadn't framed Julie, why would he have saved her? In the end, he **was** just feeling guilty for doing something wrong!" Florence insisted indignantly.

"That's right! If he didn't do it, why did he save her?" James echoed.

"I've really had enough of you guys!" Dahlia's emotions finally exploded.

"Why? Why do you always have to pick on Dustin? What exactly did he do to you? Must you purposely pick fights with him? In our three years of marriage, he has always been honest and agreeable, but you have always had a prejudice against him. Even though he had never done anything **wrong**, you kept pushing blame on him again and again. Could you really be so blinded to how good he is?"

She **was** basically roaring by the end of her tirade.

Everyone **was** scared stiff.

After that spiel, Dahlia couldn't **stand** it anymore. She threw the door open and left.

She got in her car and **sped** down the road.

Her tears, however, couldn't **stop** falling.

She regretted it.

She really regretted it.

She regretted being so impulsive; she regretted believing her mother's words; and she regretted misunderstanding Dustin.

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