

Mr. Warner Your Ex-Wife is Brilliant by Paula Chapter 22 -

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Chapter 22

On the **grand** cinematic display.

Zachary was **engrossed**, his mind navigating an ocean of **complex** problems. A seat away, Jake mirrored him, **studiously** carving his way through the same **puzzle**.

However, with the ticking clock signifying a **mere** four minutes and fifteen seconds until the deadline, Jake's concentration wavered. His darting eyes scanned the room before his hand dipped into his pocket, retrieving a crumpled note. A swift flick sent it skidding across the floor to settle by Zachary's shoe.

With an underhanded press on his smartwatch, Zane froze the video feed at the exact moment, playing the scene in an incriminating loop.

The projection zoomed in, exposing the act in stark clarity – Jake's concealed hand ejecting the note, his face a picture of guilt.

Gasps rippled through the audience. Jake's behavior was unfathomable, a blatant **breach** of the competition's integrity. They understood that being caught cheating wouldn't just stain the event but could also tarnish the perpetrator's future!

"Make him apologize!"

"Strip him of his place!"

"Report this! Report it now!"

"Who are his parents? They need to set him straight!"

After a moment of shocked silence, the crowd began to spew accusations.

At the heart of the stage, Jake's face turned a deep shade of red, with righteous indignation etched across his features. "That's not what happened! The video's been doctored! I was working on my problems the whole time!" Despite defending his case, his plea fell upon unresponsive ears, overwhelmed by the tide of disapproval.

"Jake, this is a competition, not your personal power playground," Zachary's stern **voice** sliced through the commotion. His gaze briefly met Zane's before landing on Jake. His eyes hardened, slicing through Jake's weak defense.

He turned to the host, his tone frosty. "You know what to do, don't **you?**"

With a vigorous nod, the host wiped away the **beads of** nervous sweat dotting his forehead. Was this reckless child inviting catastrophe by provoking **the young heir of** the Warner family?

The man **surveyed** Jake, **still reeling on the stage**, before turning to the **audience, voice** resonating **throughout** the hall. "The **Einstein Elite's** Mental Arithmetic Competition stands for fair and **open** competition. Cheating is unforgivable. **Thus, I formally** declare Jake Bennet disqualified. We will **include** him in our **enduring list of** banned individuals."

The crowd erupted in resounding approval. The parents believed that the organizer **acted appropriately** in delivering **rightful justice**.

"Escort this child out," the host ordered, aiming to minimize further **disruptions**.

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"Inhand me! **Let me go!**" Jake thrashed against the security guard's **grip, desperation** nging his **voice**. "**The** cameras couldn't have caught me. Someone is framing me!"

ine **observed** with a blend **of** sympathy and bewilderment. How could someone of such telligence conceive something so foolish?

tap on his **watch**, and the screen went blank, the room returning to normal.

Zachary found his eyes drawn to Zane. His fists clenched, an unfamiliar surge of emotion sing within him.

rowing up, he hadn't formed any friendships since his brilliance set him apart from his peers. He was also irked by the constant whining and crying of other children. Yet, when Zane stood up for him, he felt a strange rush of gratitude.

Shaking his head, Zachary dismissed the notion. How could he, of all people, feel moved?

The spectacle soon wound down, and **the** competition concluded.

As Zachary exited the building, the butler greeted him warmly. "Young Master, I've given Mr. Bennet a stern talking to about Jake's behavior."

Zachary's reply was absentminded, his mind elsewhere. His lips curved up in an almost imperceptible smile.

The housekeeper paused, startled, before realization dawned. His smile widened. "Young Master, something happened today, but you look quite content. **Is** everything all right?"

"It's nothing," Zachary responded, maintaining his habitual frigid calm. "I've developed an odd craving for ice cream." Without waiting for a response, he made a straight dash toward a nearby ice cream parlor.

The peculiar part was he wasn't entirely sure if he was even fond of ice cream.

Once the housekeeper completed the transaction and handed over a pair of cones, he shot Zachary a brief look. "The day is drawing to a close, Young Master. Shall we return home?"

"In a moment." Balancing two **ice** cream cones, Zachary swept his gaze over the crowd, his youthful face belying his normally detached demeanor.

The housekeeper's heart filled with warmth. Having watched Zachary mature over the years, he was all too aware of the heavy expectations Zachary's distinguished lineage imposed on him. It was the first time he had witnessed the young master showing consideration for someone else.

“Hey!” Catching sight of Zane in **the** crowd, Zachary darted towards him, thrusting an ice **cream** cone his **way**, his face as unemotional as ever. “Here.”

Zane regarded the proffered **ice** cream and then Zachary with a tilted head. “I don’t want it. “

Zachary’s impatience shone through. “I **don’t** like owing others.”

“**All** right.” Zane **accepted the ice** cream and was about to walk away when Zachary **stopped** him.

“I know **you were** the **one** who brewed the bitter **coffee** for me last time, and **you** helped me **today**. I won’t hold **a grudge** for the former incident. You’re a decent person. Let’s be **friends.**” **Zachary** took a deep breath, having never said such words nor having had **any**

friends **before.**

But Zane stirred a sense of **familiarity** in him and **a** strong desire to befriend him.

Zane raised an eyebrow, **the ice** cream in one hand, the other **tucked** into his **pocket, exuding** an aloof charm. **Friends?**

He had no intention of befriending a child birthed by the people he despised most. His mother wouldn’t have suffered if it wasn’t **for** them.

Zane’s eyes darkened, a glint of malice flickering in them. But befriending Zachary might bring him closer to his targets, aiding his revenge master plan. A small smile curved his chubby face. “Sure, why not?”

“Excellent! Young friend, if you have no other plans, why not come home with our young master? I’ll arrange for someone to drop you **off** later tonight,” the housekeeper interjected, eager to nurture this budding friendship.

Zachary’s gaze rested on Zane, a hint of anxiety in his eyes.

After a moment’s thought, Zane nodded. “That would be helpful.”

At the Warner Crest Estate

Zane and Zachary walked into the expansive living room. A man in a tailored black suit occupied the plush sofa. His **eyes** fixated on the laptop display, exuding a sense of poised dominance. The atmosphere within the room grew denser as his focused stare fell upon Zane.

“Was it you?”

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