

### Chapter 32

The next morning, Duncan made breakfast with a pleasant smile that got everyone who caught a glimpse of him marveled. They wondered whether he had won a lottery ticket. Laila, after seeing Duncan set the dining table with a big smile on his face, wondered if Zinnia had given him a chance to take advantage of her last night because she was feeling angry.

She rushed to Zinnia's room and after knocking three times, Zinnia opened the door, surfacing with a smile on her face.

"Zinnia, you look happy," Laila observed as she walked into the room. Zinnia locked the door behind and inhaled the dress morning air that came in through the windows of the room she had opened a while ago. "Zinnia?"

"What is it, Mother? Isn't the morning air so nice in your room?"

"What?"

"Are the windows of your room open?"

"Well...whatever! You have not even greeted me, Zinnia." Laila frowned, rolling her eyes.

"Oh. My bad." Zinnia chuckled and pulled her mother into a hug. "You smell so nice this morning. Did you use the whole bottle of the cologne I got you from Paris this morning to hide your anger?"

"Good thing you know that I am angry. What is wrong with you? You look so happy and you shouldn't appear in the dining room with such an expression so you would not upset your Grandmother the more, okay?"



"Whatever. You should not be bothered by what happened last night, Mother."

"What? Hell, I am bothered. You know I was not able to sleep a wink last night because I got so worried and upset. Did you know how bad I felt yesterday to see your grandmother slap you and humiliate you in front of the others last night?"

"I am sure you were more upset because you fear that I might not be allowed to work in the company again."

"Exactly. I know with you working at the company, there is a big chance that Marcus might be made the CEO of the company soon..."

"And what about me?" Zinnia asked, almost yelling. She hated it when her mother talked about Marcus being the one to take over the company soon and putting her aside.

"Oh dear, you would be the COO then. You will help your brother to attain greater heights. The victory will be ours."

Zinnia shook her head, vehemently, turning her back to her mother. "I don't want to help anyone out. I want to be the first. I want to be the head and not the tail!"

Laila chuckled, clapping her hands in astonishment. "You seem to have lost it." She walked up to Zinnia, making her turn around to face her. "I guess my Mother's slap really affected you so much. But, listen to me, you should rather start finding a way to make it up to your grandmother instead of thinking of running the business."

"Oh. I know the issue here. You always looked down on me. It is so ridiculous that you consider Marcus more capable and competent than

me."

"Hey, sweetheart, it is the truth."

"Truth? Bullshit. That is what you believe is the truth merely because of what you've gone through in the past."

"Shut up, young lady. I know where you're driving to, but just shut the hell up."

"Wow. You know, I did not want to say this when I realized it but I will say it now. The reason why my grandmother doesn't believe in me is because of you. You failed her like her son, Uncle George."

"Oh my goodness, Zinnia...?"

"Yeah, that is the truth. You were her first child, she had lots of hopes in you but you shattered it. You did not meet up to her expectations and you ended up living under your parents' roof again..."

"It is because your father is useless. If he wasn't, he wouldn't have left us. I had no other option. If you don't like staying in this house then leave, Zinnia!"

"No way. This is my grandfather's house."

"Oh, well, this is my father's house."

"Why don't you go to your husband's house?"

"Shut up! Isn't your worthless husband, Duncan, living in this house too, huh? Do not act like a proud eagle now because you have a good position in the company because believe me when I say that you wouldn't have been the Chief Information Officer - CIO of the company."

"It's a lie. I got nothing off you. I attained the position with my merits, hard work, and sweat. Grandmother's outburst last night was justifiable, at least she believed in me, unlike you who does not want to support her daughter but treasures her son over her daughter."

"You feel I've been unfair to you all these years?"

"Exactly."

"No. It's because I am wiser than you could ever be. Why won't I fully support Marcus and oblige you to help him become the CEO? He's just a step away from the position. He's the COO now. You have only been working for the company for a couple of years. Marcus worked hard for your grandmother to give him the position he has now. I don't think you've done one-third of what he did and you want to fly up to the top, you better wake up from your dream world."

"Really?"

"Yes, dear. You know, you're just like your father. You both have high ambitions and you go for bigger things in a short time."

"Well, at least he was better because unlike you, he never sat home all day or watched fashion shows or bought clothes out of impulse."

Laila held her hand up to slap Zinnia but stopped herself as she saw that it wouldn't be the right thing to do.

"You know what, it's hard to make someone like you understand," Laila scoffed and started heading to the door. "I wish you don't find a way to appease your grandmother so she strips you of your position."

"Ah ah, it is never going to happen because I have found a way, dear

mother."

Upon hearing that, Laila stopped at the door and spun to meet Zinnia's glowing brown eyes.

Raising up an eyebrow, Laila asked, "What do you mean?"

"I simply meant what I said," Zinnia answered casually and went to sit at her dressing table to put on her makeup.

"Are you for real?"

"Yes. You might think you're wiser than me, but you're wrong. I already found a way last night."

"Wow." Laila got elated. "So, what's the way, my dear?"

Zinnia chuckled at her mother's changed tone and manner. "I'm not saying a word anymore. Kindly leave my room. I want to get onto something important."

Laila nodded, swallowing the words she intended to utter. She exhaled and left, amazed.

Twenty minutes later, at the dining room, everyone took their seats around the table in the dining room, waiting for Ma'am Luna to arrive.

When ma'am Luna arrived, she took her seat and just then, Zinnia walked in.

"Good morning everyone," she greeted cheerfully before taking her seat. When her eyes met that of her grandmother's which were shooting lasers at her, her smile slowly disappeared as the moment she slapped her last night flashed in her mind. Zinnia composed herself and started

clearing her throat in a delicate manner to speak.

As Duncan started serving the meal, ma'am Luna uttered, "You all are just useless in this house. None of you can do anything worthy of my praise..."

"Excuse me, grandmother, I have something to say. Please don't feel devastated because of what happened because there's another way."

"What are you trying to say?" Ma'am Luna asked, her frown deepening. They all shifted their gaze to Zinnia.

"Grandmother, the people who have the contract are foreigners, and Peterson and a few others were their picks. They wanted to see their presentations yesterday and they had great hopes for Peterson, and fortunately for us, the other presenters' presentations were a flop too. Now, I have a chance to make a presentation and join the batch who will be presenting theirs in the next three days."

The news lightened Ma'am Luna's mood and a smile tugged her lips as she looked away from Zinnia.

Seeing the change in her grandmother's expression, Zinnia continued, "So, I have secured a chance for our company and I'll do my very best and get a brilliant presentation ready in the next twenty-four hours..."

"I will get the presentation ready in the next three hours," Lisa cut in, dropping her cup of tea.

Zinnia's lips parted in astonishment. She wondered how Lisa was going to do such a thing in just 3 hours. As she opened her mouth to disagree, Ma'am Luna who was impressed by Lisa's assurance said, "That's good, Lisa. I'm looking up to you."

Lisa nodded and they all continued with their meals, while Duncan got immersed in deep thoughts as he left the room.

"Zinnia, you won't beat me in this one. You'll never get the deal with whatever presentation you give," Duncan swore in his mind as he approached the kitchen.

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