

Chapter 53

Zinnia, visibly irritated by Duncan's statement, abruptly stood up in annoyance. Her sudden movement and the tone of her voice conveyed her strong reaction to his words. She confronted him, questioning his sanity and daring to assume that she would be the one cooking and serving.

"Duncan, are you crazy? How dare you mention I will cook and serve, huh?"

Duncan, still pretending to be innocent, responded with a hint of satisfaction at seeing his wife become angry. His enjoyment of provoking her anger was evident in his demeanor and response.

Interrupting the exchange between Karla and Duncan, Laura also rose from her seat. She expressed her disagreement with Duncan's behavior, emphasizing that he should show respect for the fact that it is their daughter who has contributed to his comfortable lifestyle. Laura's comment suggested that Karla's presence or support has played a significant role in Duncan's well-being. ³

"You would be nothing or far from this world if my daughter hadn't married you."

Zinnia affirmed her mother's sentiment, stating that Duncan must be out of his mind for making such a statement. She added that he lacked the necessary respect and gratitude towards her, considering himself unworthy of her. The strong language used by Karla and Laura indicated their frustration and disdain for Duncan's behavior.

"Mother, he has the fucking nerves to spill nonsense," Zinnia hissed.

Ma'am Luna, exerting her authority, intervened to maintain control over the situation. She sternly instructed both Karla and Duncan to cease their raised voices and demanded their compliance."

"Never you both dare to raise your voices in my presence. This is my last warning and it should stick to the back of your head." The forcefulness of her command compelled them to sit back down, signifying the power she held in the situation.

Ma'am Luna then addressed Zinnia directly, assigning her the task of cleaning, cooking, and serving for a week, as Duncan had originally suggested.

"And you, Zinnia, you'll do the cleaning, cooking, and serving onward for a week, just as Duncan said, got it?"

"Grandmother, no, I..."

Zinnia attempted to protest, potentially wanting to express her disagreement or appeal against the punishment, but Ma'am Luna interrupted her, demanding her understanding and compliance with a raised voice.

"Am I understood?!"

Overwhelmed by her grandmother's forceful outburst, Zinnia trembled and nodded in agreement, indicating her reluctant acceptance of the assigned tasks. The emotional impact of Ma'am Luna's yell on Zinnia was evident as she quivered and felt compelled to comply.

Duncan, on the other hand, experienced a sense of satisfaction and joy upon witnessing Zinnia's distress. His pleasure at her suffering became too much to contain. Zinnia, overcome with emotion, arose and departed

while sobbing.

Laura, recognizing her daughter's emotional state, took it upon herself to provide comfort and support. She followed Zinnia out of the room, likely to console her and offer solace during this difficult moment.

Duncan, feeling a sense of self-satisfaction, observed as his mother-in-law and wife ascended the stairs. A smile of contentment appeared on his face, presumably pleased with the outcome of the situation.

Unbeknownst to Duncan, Marcus had been attentively observing his various expressions and reactions.

Noticing Marcus's gaze, Duncan put on an innocent expression, attempting to conceal any ulterior motives or hidden intentions. He used the excuse of retrieving more coffee for Marcus and the others, suggesting his willingness to serve and accommodate their needs. With that pretense, Duncan quietly excused himself, leaving the dining room.

However, before completely leaving the area, Duncan paused and concealed himself by the wall when Marcus began to speak. Curiosity got the better of him, and he eavesdropped on the conversation taking place between Marcus and Ma'am Luna.

"Grandma, don't you find Duncan weird?" Marcus asked.

Duncan, hidden from their view, observed Ma'am Luna's response as she shrugged, indicating her indifference or lack of concern regarding Duncan's behavior.

The interaction hinted at a potential distrust or suspicion that Marcus harbored towards Duncan, while Ma'am Luna appeared nonchalant or unaffected by any perceived strangeness.

Duncan remained hidden against the wall, listening intently as Ma'am

Luna reacted to Marcus's implication about Duncan's peculiar behavior. Ma'am Luna, clearly taken aback by Marcus's insinuation, dropped her cutlery and focused her attention on him.

"What are you trying to imply?"

"Well, Duncan seems..."

"Hold on. Before you talk about someone else, why don't you first brief me on how you're handling the company issues as the C.O.O.," Ma'am Luna required. By redirecting the conversation, Ma'am Luna shifted the focus away from Duncan and onto Marcus's own responsibilities within the company.

This redirection seemed to make Marcus uncomfortable, as he squirmed and avoided direct eye contact with Ma'am Luna. Duncan, noticing Marcus's restlessness, couldn't help but smile, realizing that Marcus was now bothered by the shift in attention and the delay in voicing his suspicions about Duncan.

Duncan was aware that Marcus had wanted to express his concerns or suspicions about him, but Ma'am Luna's demand for an update on Marcus's professional responsibilities prevented him from doing so at that moment.

Getting irritated by her grandson's reluctance to answer her question, Ma'am Luna yelled.

"Start talking, Marcus."

Her strong voice made Marcus shudder and he adjusted his tie and spoke.

"They've been calling the company. Those who signed a deal with me, they've been disturbing me because there's no progress due to the

strange disappearance of the money that day."

"Disappearance or...you took it?" Bella asked, poking her head at Marcus who frowned.

"Don't mind her, Marcus," George requested.

"I understand your wife wants to upset me but I don't give her the chance, Uncle George," Marcus said and returned his gaze to Ma'am Luna. "Grandmother, I'm trying to find a way out."

"It's been over 2 weeks and you've not found a way?! Do you want the company your late grandfather and I built with sweat in years to fold before you sit up and do something?!"

"No, grandmother. I just don't know how to recover the 50 million dollars. I had thought Zinnia would get the deal and..."

"Shut up, loser." Ma'am Luna's yell echoed in the room, momentarily causing everyone to put a hold on eating. "You and Zinnia are good-for-nothing just like your father was."

"I'm sorry if I've disappointed you, Grandma, but..."

"Keep your useless apologies and no buts or Ifs, just know that your position is on the line now. Get a solution to the problem you've caused or you'll lose your position. Am I understood?"

As Marcus heard his grandmother's threat, a wave of uneasiness washed over him, causing him to gulp audibly. The weight of the situation settled heavily on his shoulders, and he realized the urgency of the problem at hand. He knew that he couldn't afford to waste any time or effort if he wanted to find a solution.

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"Understood, Grandma," Marcus replied, his voice tinged with a mix of apprehension and determination. He could feel the tension in the room as Ma'am Luna hissed in response, her displeasure palpable.

Despite the intimidating atmosphere, Marcus gathered his courage and pressed on. He knew he had to voice his concerns and share his thoughts with his grandmother.

"Grandma, I don't know if you or anyone else has noticed, but Duncan has been acting strangely lately," Marcus spoke up, his words cautious yet resolute.

Bella, who had been quietly listening, interjected with a dismissive remark. "Yes, he knows his place and continues to play the role of the family's lap dog," she uttered, her tone dripping with disdain.

Marcus disagreed, shaking his head in disagreement. "That's not it, Aunt." He countered firmly. "I suspect him. There's something more going on, something that requires our attention."

As Marcus continued to speak, Duncan, who had been hiding by the wall, listened attentively to every word. His presence went unnoticed by the others in the room, allowing him to observe the unfolding conversation without interruption.

"Duncan seems indifferent, and his aura has changed," Marcus stated, his voice filled with a mix of concern and curiosity. He couldn't help but wonder what might have caused such a shift in Duncan's demeanor.

Ma'am Luna, never one to hold back her opinions, responded sharply. "Yes, he has become smart, unlike you, my foolish grandson," she retorted, her tone laced with sarcasm. "Instead of suspecting Duncan, who is incapable of even the simplest tasks, I think you should focus on

finding a solution to the problem you've brought upon the company and protect your position."

Marcus took a deep breath, maintaining his composure despite his grandmother's biting words. He understood the importance of addressing the immediate issue at hand, but he couldn't shake off his suspicions about Duncan.

"Don't worry, grandmother," Marcus replied, his voice firm and resolute. "I hear your concerns, and I will do everything in my power to rectify the situation and protect our family's interests. But I can't ignore the signs I'm seeing. There's something more to Duncan's behavior, and I believe it's worth investigating."

As Marcus spoke, Duncan's eyes darted around the room, his expression a mix of curiosity and apprehension. He realized that his secret observations had not gone unnoticed, and he wondered how his role in the unfolding events would be revealed. Though he was certain Marcus didn't hold any big thing against him.

Ma'am Luna remarked. "You seem jobless, Marcus." She took a brief pause and her eyes narrowed as she addressed Marcus, her tone growing more menacing. "And don't you dare seek my attention by spewing nonsense without any concrete proof, or I will ensure that you never dare to show your 32 teeth again," she warned, her words dripping with a chilling intensity.

Marcus swallowed nervously, understanding the gravity of his grandmother's threat. He nodded in acknowledgment, realizing that he needed to gather solid evidence to support his suspicions before confronting Duncan or involving his family further.

Meanwhile, Duncan, who had been listening intently, straightened his

posture and a crafty smile played on his lips. Inwardly, he reveled in Marcus's continued suspicion of him, relishing the chaos and torment he planned to unleash upon them all.

"Keep suspecting me, Marcus," Duncan thought to himself, a sinister gleam in his eyes. "You'll never know who I truly am now." He couldn't help but smirk, reveling in the power he held over the situation. "Keep on suspecting. You'll never know that I am the one behind all the upcoming torments and problems that will plague you all."

With his mind set on his devious plans, Duncan turned and made his way to the kitchen, his steps filled with a newfound confidence and a chilling determination.

A moment later, as the family was preparing to leave, the sudden entrance of Peterson startled everyone in the house. He burst through the front door, his face filled with determination, and made a beeline towards Zinnia, who happened to be descending the stairs at that moment.

Zinnia's initial surprise quickly transformed into anger as she laid eyes on Peterson. She had severed all ties with him after their relationship ended on a sour note. The accusation he had made against her had left a bitter taste in her mouth, and she couldn't help but feel a surge of resentment towards him ever since that day.

"What are you doing here?" Zinnia snapped, her voice dripping with aggression. Her eyes narrowed as she glared at him, her anger palpable in the air.

Zinnia had been contemplating revealing Lisa's involvement in the flash drive swap, using it as an opportunity to get back at Lisa who has been gloating over her failure. But before she could utter a word, Peterson's

unexpected response shocked her to the core.

"Zinnia, I'm here for my MONEY," Peterson declared, his tone firm and unyielding.

Zinnia's anger momentarily took a backseat as confusion washed over her. She hadn't anticipated this response from Peterson. The revelation left her momentarily speechless as she tried to make sense of his words.

The atmosphere in the room grew tense, and everyone present turned their attention towards the unfolding confrontation, their curiosity piqued by Peterson's unexpected demand.



Gem Lynne author

“How was it, my dear readers? Kindly encourage me with your comments and votes, please. Thank you.”

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