

Chapter 65

As Duncan spoke those words, he was clearly issuing a challenge to Lisa. His confident tone hinted at a determination to prove himself as the better player. With that, Duncan cast a final glance at Lisa's room door before continuing his walk down the hallway.

As he whistled, he suddenly halted in his tracks upon reaching Zinnia's room. Intrigued, he stood by the side of the door and peeped in through the partly-opened door. Inside, he saw Zinnia in tears, her distress evident on her face. Observing the scene, Duncan couldn't help but smile, finding some satisfaction in witnessing Zinnia's vulnerability.

Zinnia's mother, Laila, noticing her daughter's tears, moved to comfort her. She approached the tissue box and took a tissue, urging Zinnia to stop crying. Her words carried a gentle tone, reflecting her motherly concern and desire to soothe Zinnia's emotions which went down the drain.

"My dear, stop crying," Laila encouraged, her voice filled with compassion.

Duncan's joy seemed to intensify as he observed Zinnia's emotional state. Suppressing his laughter, he relished in her distress. His satisfaction stemmed from witnessing her vulnerability and the power dynamics within the family.

As Laila extended the tissues to Zinnia, Duncan fought to contain his amusement. He found it amusing how Zinnia pushed away her mother's hand, rejecting any attempts at comfort. Her actions reflected her desire to embrace her sadness and humiliation as if it provided her with a sense of validation.

"Let me cry, mother! I feel so humiliated today," Zinnia asserted, her voice filled with anguish. She wanted to fully experience and express her emotions, seeking solace in her tears. Zinnia's words revealed the depth of her pain and the weight of the humiliation she had endured.

Nodding in understanding, Laila responded with empathy, acknowledging her daughter's feelings. "My dear, I understand you," she uttered, her voice laced with compassion. Laila attempted to convey her support and comprehension of Zinnia's emotional turmoil.

However, Zinnia vehemently shook her head and dismissed her mother's attempt at empathy. "No, you don't, mother. You've never been humiliated like this in your life, and you've never had to watch your husband revel in your humiliation as I did," Zinnia declared, her voice filled with bitterness. Her statement implied that Laila could not truly comprehend the depth of her pain because she had not experienced a similar level of humiliation in her own life.

Duncan quickly straightened up and pressed his back against the wall. He realized the risk of being caught if he continued to observe the scene.

Meanwhile, Zinnia continued to express her anguish, sharing the details of her humiliation. "That worthless husband of mine was so happy to see me serve him. I, the respectable Zinnia Lennart, was a househelp tonight, I served everyone after cooking. I felt miserable, mother. It was so shameful especially when grandmother didn't for once consider my feelings before supporting Duncan when he retorted."

In response to Zinnia's words, her mother, Laila, uttered, "Don't mind that good-for-nothing fool of a husband you've got," she reassured, her voice filled with support. Her words were a stark reminder that Zinnia deserved better treatment and should not let Duncan's actions affect her

self-esteem.

But Zinnia, not appeased by her mother's words, yelled as she jerked up to her feet. "He's not my husband!" She rolled her eyes, feeling worse for her mother addressing Duncan as her husband. "I don't want him to ever be addressed as my husband," She stated with disdain, causing Duncan's smile to widen.

He was feeling more elated that Zinnia was becoming more spiteful of him. He wanted that to happen because he had anticipated it.

"Mother, did you see how complacent Duncan was?" Zinnia asked with a tone mixed with disbelief and rage.

"He was enjoying you serving him with no shame after how you elevated him by marrying him," Laila said.

Duncan's reaction to his mother-in-law's remarks was filled with disdain and disbelief. He sneered, unable to comprehend how Laila had the audacity to make such statements, especially considering that her own daughter had cheated on him and openly admitted to it.

"Wasn't that a grave action of hers too?" He silently pondered whether Zinnia's actions could also be considered grave, and the thought hissed through his mind, emphasizing his frustration and anger.

"You shouldn't worry about him, my dear," Laila went on to say.

"I can't help but worry, mother. His actions today were contemptful. I never expected that from him," Zinnia scoffed.

"He's an ungrateful garbage," Laila spat though Duncan remained unaffected. Her words failed to have any impact on him, for he had developed a thick skin.

Zinnia, with a determined look in her eyes, took some steps forward and recounted the unusual encounter with Duncan. She refused to simply accept the situation and instead took it upon herself to question and explore the matter further.

With a confident gesture, Zinnia reached up and tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear, a subtle indication of her resolve. She began by expressing her observation, stating, "His action was strange, Mother." Her tone conveyed a mix of curiosity and concern, hinting at her desire to delve deeper into the matter.

Laila, taken aback by her daughter's assertiveness, was momentarily unsure of how to respond. She asked, somewhat puzzled, "What do you mean?" It was clear that Zinnia's words had sparked her curiosity as well, even if she hadn't initially noticed anything out of the ordinary.

Undeterred, Zinnia pressed on, eager to share her insights with her mother. She reminded Laila of the power she once held over Duncan, highlighting their history together. "Come on, Mother, you know I used to have Duncan at the palm of my hand," she explained. "He would do everything I proposed without question. He never once dared to talk back, even when I humiliated him in public." Her words hinted at a sense of entitlement and control that she had grown accustomed to.

However, Zinnia's tone shifted, now filled with a mix of surprise and concern. "But today was far from different," she continued. It was clear that Duncan's recent behavior had caught her off guard, challenging the established dynamics of their relationship.

Caught in the midst of the conversation, Duncan furrowed his brows and cautiously peeped in, noticing Laila's expression of bewilderment.

Laila walked up behind Zinnia. Feeling her mother's hand on her shoulder, Zinnia turned to face Laila, her eyes searching for understanding and she was eager to listen to what she wanted to say. "His behavior isn't shocking, Zinnia. I guess he's just taking the chance to irk you and get back at you for cheating on him. He probably still feels hurt by what you did."

Though acknowledging her mother's perspective, Zinnia couldn't shake the feeling that there was more to the situation than just Duncan seeking revenge. She tried to articulate her thoughts, saying, "No, mother. That's true, but... I feel something else is underlying."

Perplexed, Laila inquired, "What do you mean?" Her genuine curiosity mirrored the concern she had for her daughter.

Zinnia struggled to put her intuition into words, attempting to convey the shift she had noticed in Duncan's behavior. "Nowadays, he acts like he wields some sort of power," she explained, her voice tinged with a mixture of frustration and confusion. "Don't you see his display?"

Sadly for her, Laila shook her head and shrugged, indicating her inability to perceive the subtleties that Zinnia had picked up on. "No," she admitted, her voice filled with a sense of helplessness or perhaps a lack of awareness.

Zinnia let out a sigh, a mixture of disappointment and resignation. It was obvious that her mother couldn't fully grasp the significance of Duncan's changed demeanor, leaving Zinnia to navigate this emotional labyrinth on her own.

However, Duncan, still standing by the door, wondered what more Zinnia had suspected about him. As he patiently waited for her to go on

and open up to her mother, his amusement diminished.

"Mother, you don't think Duncan has changed strangely since he returned?"

"No, dear. You are overthinking it."

Laila's response conveyed a sense of skepticism, indicating that she didn't share Zinnia's suspicions about Duncan.

"Maybe," Zinnia replied, a note of uncertainty in her voice. It seemed that she was starting to doubt her own instincts, partially swayed by her mother's reassurances.

However, unbeknownst to Zinnia and Laila, Duncan's reaction to Zinnia's doubts was far from innocent. Sensing that Zinnia was beginning to shrug off her suspicions, a sly smile appeared on his face. It was clear that he was aware of their conversation and was playing his cards carefully.

Just then, Duncan's phone vibrated, indicating an incoming call. Seizing the opportunity, he quietly moved a few steps away from the room door and retrieved his phone from his pocket. His actions hinted at a desire for privacy or secrecy.

"Hello, Duncan?" a voice greeted him from the other end of the line. Duncan's smile widened upon recognizing the caller as Peterson.

With a scornful tone, Duncan answered the call, his voice laced with a hint of arrogance. "Yes. Who am I on to?" His dismissive attitude portrayed his lack of regard for Peterson.

On the other end of the line, Peterson introduced himself, hoping to capture Duncan's attention. "Ah, do not hang up. It is Peterson Rogers on

the line." Peterson's urgency was apparent as he pleaded for Duncan's attention.

Unfazed by the mention of Peterson's name, Duncan responded with a hint of indifference, asking, "So? How may I help you?" His tone conveyed a sense of detachment and a reluctance to offer assistance.

As the conversation between Duncan and Peterson continued, Duncan's sharp instincts picked up on Peterson's hesitation. He narrowed his eyes, sensing that there was more to the request than initially met the eye. Duncan's curiosity was piqued as he awaited Peterson's response.

Finally, Peterson spoke, his voice filled with a mix of desperation and vulnerability. "Duncan, I need your help, please."

A smirk embraced Duncan's face as he lifted his brows, displaying a sense of pride and satisfaction. The request seemed to align with his own desires or perhaps presented an opportunity for him to exercise control and assert his influence. The full extent of Duncan's intentions remained shrouded in mystery, leaving Zinnia, Laila, and the readers to wonder about his true motives and the implications of his involvement with Peterson.

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