

## Chapter 92

With determined steps, he approached the cupboard, his heart pounding in his chest. Pulling open the drawer, Duncan's hand trembled slightly as he reached for the diary. The leather-bound book felt cool and worn in his grasp, its weight a testament to the years it had weathered. He paused for a moment, taking in a deep breath, as if preparing himself for what lay beyond the cover.

With a flicker of anticipation in his eyes, Duncan carefully opened the diary to the latter half. The pages were filled with cryptic writings, a maze of symbols, and enigmatic phrases that danced across the faded parchment. Each stroke of ink seemed to hold a hidden story, waiting to be deciphered.

Duncan's gaze was captivated by the cryptic writings, his mind racing to make sense of the puzzle laid out before him. He traced his fingers along the intricate lines, feeling an inexplicable connection to the words as if they held the key to unlocking secrets from the past.

Time seemed to stand still as Duncan immersed himself in his father's cryptic musings. The urgency that had compelled him to this moment only intensified, as if he was on the precipice of discovering a truth that had long eluded him. With every turn of the page, he delved deeper into the enigmatic world his father had left behind.

As Duncan's eyes scanned the cryptic writings, a peculiar realization struck him like a bolt of lightning. Most of the words were not written in the conventional manner; they were actually written upside down. Confusion mingled with curiosity as he tried to comprehend the reason behind his father's unconventional writing style.



"Why would my father write in such a manner?" Duncan pondered, his mind spinning with questions and possibilities. The discovery only fueled his desire to uncover the truth hidden within the diary.

However, a sudden recollection of his mother's reaction from their previous encounter flashed through Duncan's mind. The memory served as a warning, reminding him of the potential consequences of his actions. Doubt and hesitation crept into his thoughts, causing his hands to freeze midway through turning the pages.

Aware of the risks involved, Duncan made a split-second decision. Instead of delving deeper into the diary's contents, he carefully closed it and swiftly tucked it into the inner pocket of his jacket. The diary now safely hidden away, he took a final glance at the photograph of Lady Zelda on the cupboard, his expression filled with remorse.

"Sorry, but I have to steal this," Duncan muttered softly, his words carrying a mix of guilt and determination. He acknowledged the necessity of his actions, driven by an insatiable need to uncover the truth about his father and the secrets that surrounded him.

With a deep inhale, Duncan steadied himself and left the room behind, closing the door quietly to maintain the illusion of undisturbed tranquility. The weight of the stolen diary and the burden of his actions settled heavily on his conscience, but he knew that he had embarked on a path that would ultimately lead him to the answers he sought.

Little did Duncan know the challenges and revelations that awaited him as he ventured further into the labyrinth of his father's secrets, his journey now fraught with both danger and the potential for redemption.

Later in the night, Duncan returned to the Lennart Mansion. His

footsteps echoed through the grand hallways of the house as he made his way deeper into the mansion. The dimly lit corridors exuded an eerie stillness, and he found solace in the absence of prying eyes and intrusive questions. The house had fallen into a hushed slumber after the dinner, with each member of the household retiring to their respective rooms.

With a sense of relief, Duncan continued his journey, his destination fixed on Zinnia's room. However, as he ventured further, his steps faltered, and a sudden realization struck him like a bolt of lightning. The weight of the diary in his pocket served as a reminder of the secrets it held within its pages, urging him to delve into its contents.

A decision crystallized in Duncan's mind. He knew that this quiet moment presented the perfect opportunity to explore the cryptic writings of his father's diary. With a quick U-turn, he changed his course, abandoning the path to Zinnia's room and instead making his way downstairs, towards the wine cellar.

The door to the wine cellar creaked softly as Duncan pushed it open, revealing a cool, dimly lit room lined with shelves stacked with bottles of aged wine. The air carried a faint aroma of oak and earth, adding to the mystique of the underground space. Duncan stepped inside, quietly closing the door behind him, ensuring his solitude.

His eyes adjusted to the low light as he descended further into the cellar, the steps beneath his feet creating a muffled echo. The silence enveloped him like a comforting cloak as he sought out a secluded corner to immerse himself in the secrets of the diary.

In the dim glow, Duncan found a small alcove tucked away from prying eyes. He settled himself against the cool stone wall, the anticipation coursing through his veins. Pulling the diary from his pocket, he held it delicately in his hands, as if cradling a precious artifact.

With a deep breath, Duncan opened the diary, the flickering candlelight casting a soft glow upon the pages. The cryptic writings sprawled across the parchment, waiting to be deciphered. As he began to read, the world around him faded into the background, consumed by the secrets and revelations that lay within the diary's intricate script.

As his gaze fixated on the middle page of the second half of the diary, he turned it upside down, anticipation coursing through his veins. His eyes widened with a mix of shock and intrigue as he deciphered the cryptic message that sprawled across the page.

"The black Jones are after me. My life they seek," the words leaped off the page, each letter etched with fear and urgency. The realization sent a shiver down Duncan's spine, as he realized the gravity of his late father's plight.

Continuing to read, the weight of the revelation deepened. The diary revealed the haunting words of Dunstan A. Walton, his father, as he expressed the imminent danger he faced. It became clear that his life had hung in the balance, targeted by unknown adversaries known as the black Jones.

A sense of foreboding filled Duncan's heart as he absorbed the chilling words. His father's voice echoed through the pages, as he spoke of an impending doom. "There might be a day, I, Dunstan A. Walton, is wiped off this earth." The certainty in the words sent a chill down Duncan's spine, and he couldn't help but feel a surge of fear and sorrow.

The diary entry continued, revealing the origins of the threat. "That day, they shall jubilate over my demise because it's their doing and it gladdens their heart." Duncan's mind raced, trying to make sense of the enigmatic message. Who were these black Jones? What had his father

done to invoke their wrath?

The final sentences struck Duncan like a thunderbolt. "My death will be caused by 5 people. I wish the one after me, my blood seeks their blood too." The words carried a weight of vengeance and a desire for justice. The magnitude of the revelation left Duncan reeling, his mind teeming with questions and a newfound determination to uncover the truth.

Duncan's lips trembled as his breath caught in his throat. The weight of the truth crashed down upon him like a thunderclap, leaving him speechless and stunned. His heart pounded in his chest as he realized that his father, the man he had admired and loved, had been taken from him in a cruel act of violence.

His lips parted, and he involuntarily gulped, trying to swallow the bitter taste of grief and disbelief that flooded his mouth. The room seemed to spin around him as his mind struggled to process the enormity of the revelation.

At that moment, Duncan realized that he had stumbled upon a dark secret, one that intertwined his family's history with a shadowy conflict. The diary became a key to unlocking the mysteries that had plagued his father's life and, potentially, his own.

A mixture of emotions swirled within Duncan—fear, anger, and an unyielding resolve to protect his family's legacy. He closed the diary, his fingers trembling.

In a hushed voice, barely audible above the sound of his racing heartbeat, Duncan muttered to his own shadow, seeking solace in the darkness. "Who could they be, the five?" he whispered, his voice filled with a mix of fear, anger, and determination. The question hung in the air, unanswered and heavy with anticipation.

For the next ten minutes, Duncan was lost in a sea of thoughts, his mind drifting into deep contemplation. He wrestled with his emotions, struggling to compose himself and make sense of the chaos that had suddenly entered his life. Images of his father flashed before his eyes, mingling with the cryptic clues from the diary, fueling his desire for answers and justice.

Finally, a decision formed in Duncan's mind. With a steely resolve, he knew he had to protect the diary, the key to unraveling the secrets surrounding his father's death. He found a slender hole, almost oblivious to its existence, and recognized it as the perfect hiding place. With delicate care, he concealed the diary within, its weight symbolizing the burden he now carried. Leaving the hiding spot behind, Duncan took a deep breath, attempting to steady himself for the challenges that lay ahead.

The next morning, as he sat at the breakfast table with the Lennart family, his outward appearance masked the storm of thoughts brewing within.

While the Lennart family ate quietly, Duncan's mind remained fixated on the revelations of the previous night. The taste of the truth lingered in his thoughts, fueling his curiosity and determination to uncover the mysteries that had been unveiled. His gaze drifted toward the diary's hiding place, reminding him that his journey toward the truth had only just begun.

Duncan's mind was still deep in thought when the voice of Ma'am Luna shattered the silence in the room, jolting him back to the present. Startled, he turned his attention towards the old woman.

"Zinnia, who was it that got the deal back then?" Ma'am Luna's voice

held a serious tone, indicating the importance of her question. Duncan sensed a certain intensity in her gaze as if she was searching for answers that held great significance to their shared interests.

Straightening up, Zinnia, spoke with a composed demeanor. "Rumors have it that it was a representative of Walton Group of Companies," she revealed, her voice carrying a hint of intrigue.

As the name left Zinnia's lips, Ma'am Luna's reaction was immediate and extreme. Her eyes widened, and the glass of water she had been holding slipped from her grasp, crashing to the floor. The sound of shattered glass filled the room, momentarily overshadowing the shock that seemed to ripple through Ma'am Luna's expression.

Duncan watched in bewilderment as Ma'am Luna stared at Zinnia with a mixture of horror and disbelief. It was as if the mention of the Walton Group of Companies had triggered a deeply buried memory or unleashed a well-guarded secret. He could see the weight of her reaction, and it piqued his curiosity even further.

"Why the strange reaction from her?" Duncan thought, staring at her.

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