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Regaining her voice after some seconds of eerie silence, Ma'am Luna asked, "What did you say? Who?"

Zinnia, too, seemed taken aback by Ma'am Luna's response, her eyes widening in response to the older woman's evident distress. Duncan's gaze shifted between the two, searching for answers in their expressions, but the gravity of the situation remained elusive.

Without uttering a word, Duncan observed the unspoken tension in the room, sensing that there was more to the story than he could comprehend. The air seemed heavy with unspoken secrets, leaving him eager to uncover the truth that lay hidden beneath the surface.

Ma'am Luna's voice trembled with a mix of frustration and intrigue as she asked the question that weighed heavily on her mind for clarification. "Was it the Walton Group of Companies that snatched the contract from us?" Her words hung in the air, laden with a sense of betrayal and longing for answers.

Zinnia, her expression solemn, nodded in affirmation. "Yes, Grandma," she confirmed, her voice reflecting the disappointment they all felt.

The mention of the mysterious CEO of the Walton Group caught everyone's attention. Marcus, leaning forward, added his input to the discussion, his tone laced with a touch of excitement. "Grandmother, other rumors have it that it was indeed the mysterious CEO of the Walton Group who carried out the presentation. My true source also confirmed it," he shared, his eyes gleaming with intrigue.

The room fell into a contemplative silence as the weight of the revelation sank in. Lisa, joining the conversation, expressed her disappointment at

the lack of concrete evidence. "Honestly, I've been diligently following the news stations that covered the event back then, but it's quite unfortunate that none of them have a picture of the man," she explained, her voice tinged with frustration.

A collective sense of longing and curiosity filled the room as they grappled with the enigmatic figure behind the Walton Group's success. The absence of a visual representation only added to the air of mystique surrounding the CEO, leaving them eager to uncover the truth and put a face to the name.

Duncan, too, found himself drawn into the intrigue, his mind buzzing with questions and possibilities. The pieces of the puzzle he was uncovering about his father's death seemed to lead to a deeper mystery, one that held the potential to unravel the secrets he had been seeking.

Bella's voice cut through the air, carrying a note of confusion and intrigue. "That's strange," she remarked, her words causing Duncan to adjust himself on his seat. His curiosity heightened, he listened intently, eager to grasp the significance of Bella's observation.

Lisa, in response to Bella's comment, chimed in with a sense of agreement. "Exactly, mother," she interjected, her voice filled with a mixture of frustration and bewilderment. "Even the representatives of foreign companies have refused to provide any review or information regarding the man who impressed them with his presentation. They've also declined any interviews," she revealed, her words painting a picture of a deeply guarded secret.

Sensing the weight of the moment, Duncan observed the expressions of those around him. Their faces mirrored a combination of confusion, intrigue, and a shared sense of bafflement. He wanted to celebrate within himself but at the moment, he couldn't. They all exchanged glances,



silently acknowledging the puzzling nature of the situation.

It was Ma'am Luna who finally broke the silence, her voice filled with a mix of resignation and realization. "So they've risen again?" she mused, her question hanging in the air like a riddle waiting to be solved. The statement caught everyone off guard, their faces filled with a mixture of surprise and curiosity as they sought to understand the deeper implications of her words.

At that moment, Duncan's gaze fixed upon Ma'am Luna, sensing that she held a key piece of the puzzle they were all trying to solve. He felt a surge of anticipation, eager to delve deeper into the mystery and uncover the truth that lay hidden in the shadows.

Duncan glanced at Marcus, who sat across the table and noticed a look of confusion exchanged between Marcus and Zinnia. As their eyes met, Duncan could sense their shared bewilderment. However, before Duncan could dwell on their confusion, he noticed Ma'am Luna's expression darken even further.

"Who are you talking about, grandma?" Marcus inquired, his voice laced with curiosity and a hint of concern.

With a sharp gaze, Ma'am Luna retorted, her eyes fixed on Marcus, "The Walton Group of Companies, fool." Her tone carried a mix of frustration and disbelief. "I never expected them to climb up to the top," she muttered, her words audible to everyone at the table. Duncan sensed a strong undercurrent of disappointment in her voice as she clenched her fist on the table.

"Why, mother?" Laila, clearly intrigued by the conversation, chimed in, hoping to understand the source of Ma'am Luna's agitation.



Ma'am Luna chose to ignore Laila's question, her focus unwavering. Duncan watched as her tightened fists caused the tablecloth to fold, revealing the intensity of her emotions. Her veins began to protrude, a physical manifestation of her rising anger or frustration. Duncan couldn't help but observe the strength of her emotions through the forceful impact she made on the table.

Her strange reactions heightened his curiosity and confusion and he hated it because he couldn't figure anything out with such a state of mind.

Zinnia, gathering her courage, spoke up, her voice tinged with curiosity and a hint of hesitation. "Grandmother, do you know the Waltons?" Her question hung in the air, and for a moment, it seemed like Ma'am Luna would ignore it entirely.

Duncan, sensing the need for clarification, was about to repeat the question when Ma'am Luna shook her head, her gaze fixed vaguely at the end of the table. "No, I don't know them." Her response was curt, leaving a palpable silence in the room.

Then, breaking the silence, Ma'am Luna's attention suddenly shifted, and she pointed her finger directly at Zinnia. "You?!" Zinnia, taken aback by the sudden focus on her, almost froze in her seat, her eyes widening in surprise.

"Did I...?" Zinnia began to ask, her voice trailing off.

Ma'am Luna cut her off abruptly, her voice firm and authoritative. "Get ready to resume working at the company."

Zinnia's eyes widened further, and a mix of emotions washed over her face — surprise, confusion, and perhaps a hint of apprehension.

Meanwhile, Duncan's spoon nearly slipped from his grasp as he heard Ma'am Luna's unexpected words. His eyes widened in surprise, and his mind raced to comprehend the implications of what she had just said. "It's barely 2 weeks, and she wants Zinnia to resume?" Duncan pondered silently, his thoughts filled with questions. "Why?"

Zinnia, caught off guard by the sudden announcement, couldn't help but giggle in disbelief. She exchanged glances with her mother while Bella and Lisa both wore frowns of confusion and displeasure.

"Thanks so much, Grandma," Zinnia managed to say, her voice tinged with both excitement and bewilderment.

Laila, always outspoken, couldn't resist making a comment. "I'm sure things aren't going well in the company if you need your favorite grandchild back," she remarked, her tone carrying a hint of sarcasm.

As Ma'am Luna observed Laila and Zinnia exchanging a celebratory high-five, a flicker of annoyance crossed her face. With a sudden forceful motion, she slammed her hand on the table, effectively silencing the room. The resounding thud filled the air, commanding attention.

"I have my reasons, best known to only me," Ma'am Luna spoke with a firmness in her voice that brooked no argument. Her gaze locked onto Laila, her warning clear.

Laila, realizing she had overstepped her bounds, quickly nodded in acknowledgment. "Sorry, mother," she apologized, her voice filled with contrition.

Marcus, who had been quietly observing the scene, cleared his throat, attempting to conceal his own displeasure. He knew better than to challenge Ma'am Luna's decisions directly.

Ma'am Luna's attention shifted from Laila to Zinnia, her voice now directed towards her favored grandchild. "Zinnia, you're resuming tomorrow, but..." she paused for a moment, building suspense. Zinnia's jaw dropped in surprise, her eyes widening as she awaited the continuation of her grandmother's words. "...you'll be under Lisa's supervision," Ma'am Luna concluded, her statement dropping like a bombshell. The room fell into a stunned silence as Zinnia struggled to process the unexpected turn of events.

She couldn't contain her disbelief, and her words came out in a mix of shock and disbelief. "Ah, you're kidding, right, grandmother?" she questioned, hoping that perhaps this was all some sort of prank her grandmother had attempted for the first time in her life.

Ma'am Luna's face contorted with anger, her voice rising sharply. "Do I look like I'm kidding, hm?!" she yelled, punctuating her words with another forceful slam of her hand on the table. The sudden noise sent a jolt of surprise through everyone in the room, except for Duncan, who managed to maintain his composure.

Laila, seizing the opportunity to voice her opinion, interjected, attempting to defend Zinnia. "Mother, Lisa was meant to be under Zinnia's supervision..."

Before Laila could finish her sentence, Bella, Zinnia's mother, cut her off, her voice filled with determination. "Excuse me, Laila," she asserted. "My daughter isn't meant to be beneath yours. She's now the CIO, got it?!"

The tension in the room escalated as Laila fired back, her voice laced with anger. "Keep your damn voice low when you're talking to me!"

Bella, unfazed by Laila's outburst, shrugged dismissively and waved her

hand in disregard. "Oh, please, save me the attitude," she retorted, maintaining her composure despite the escalating confrontation.

"Bella, I'm not your..." Laila began to retort, but before she could finish her sentence, Ma'am Luna abruptly interrupted her.

"Will you shut it!" Ma'am Luna's voice boomed, cutting through the room and instantly silencing Laila. "Keep quiet, Laila. You're always reacting impulsively," she scolded, her tone filled with frustration and impatience.

Laila, realizing that arguing further would be futile, reluctantly fell silent. However, her expression conveyed her lingering discontent.

Ma'am Luna shifted her gaze towards Zinnia, her eyes piercing and demanding. "If you're not okay with my decision, young lady, then tell me so I can permit you to get your sorry ass out there and look for a job in the streets of the city, got it?!" Her words held a mix of sternness and a touch of warning, making it clear that she expected obedience.

Zinnia, not wanting to further infuriate her grandmother, quickly composed herself and replied, "It's okay, I accept, Grandmother." Her response carried a hint of resignation, as she chose to comply rather than risk facing the consequences of defying Ma'am Luna's authority.

Clearing his throat in a haughty manner, Duncan said, "And you'll still be doing the cleanings of the house, Zinnia."

Irrked, Zinnia retorted, "How dare you?! It's over a week already, so I'm not cleaning anymore..."

"You will do it," Duncan said, smirking.

"No, I won't...!"

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"You will!" Ma'am Luna cut in, and silence fell. "It's either you accept or you forget about resuming your work at the company. Choose!"

Zinnia stared at her grandmother, surprised and speechless.



Gem Lynne author

“How was the chapter, guys? Hope you enjoyed it. I would like to know your thoughts concerning the upcoming chapters. First, tell me if you think Zinnia will accept the conditions given to her ☒....”

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