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"Your father has a grudge with our Grandpa. Why don't they resolve their conflict themselves then? There's no need to involve the entire Seet family, is there?" Nina wondered.

"Yeah, exactly! It's just unfair and unreasonable of you to take your anger out on everybody else," Maya chimed in.

Monica let out a laugh like their words were the funniest joke she had ever heard in her life.

Let my father resolve things with their grandfather? Hah!

"You think I don't wish my Dad would settle this debt with your grandfather? The problem is that they're separated by a barrier. The barrier between life and death, that is. The only way for our families to settle this debt would be if I sent your entire family down to Hell to see him!"

Oh...

Realization dawned on the two girls. Her father is already dead? And his death has something to do with Grandpa?

"Your father passed away because of Grandpa?"

"That's right. Your grandfather is a murderer! Not only did he kill my Dad, but he's also the reason why Marston Group is no more! I'm going to make him pay dearly! Oh yes, I will!" Monica's fingers curled into fists as she was reminded of the past. Her eyes were bloodshot with anger.

Maya and Nina had equal looks of shock on their faces. "Just what did Grandpa do to your father?"

"What did he do?" Monica laughed, the sound cold and bitter. "When the opportunity arrives, I'll be sure to have your grandfather tell you everything personally!"

The sisters traded glances. It was obvious that the madwoman before them had no intention of letting them go. Not only that, but she was also even going after the rest of the Seet family.

They wondered who her next target would be and whether they would be brought here as well.

After giving the men instructions to guard the girls, Monica left the laboratory. She needed to execute the next phase of her plan.

Nina shot Maya an apologetic look. "I'm sorry, Maya. This is all my fault. You wouldn't be in this situation if you hadn't come with me."

"Nina, you're not to blame here! I was the one who insisted on coming along. Oh, me and my stupid mouth! I must have jinxed us! I shouldn't have said all those stupid things about misfortune and bad luck coming for us! This is all my fault!"

"No, it has nothing to do with you cursing us. This is all because of Grandpa's past actions," Nina stated truthfully.

Maya sighed and lamented, "I wonder what he did back then. Just what terrible things must he have done for this woman to want to come after our entire family?"

"Only Grandpa has the answers. What we should be focusing on now is how to escape from here."

"Yeah! Daddy, Mommy, Juan, and Kyle aren't around. That crazy woman most definitely has something planned for Grandpa, Grandma, Uncle Davin, and Aunt Sheila too. That means we can rely on nobody but ourselves to escape now," Maya mused.

"You're right." Nina glanced over at the four well-built men by the doors with a frown on her face. "We're clearly no match for those four men physically. Our only option is to outsmart them!"

"Yeah. Time to brainstorm for ideas!"

The two girls bent their heads together as they discussed how they would outwit the men.

A short while later, they pretended they were having horrible stomachaches. Then, they tried to bribe the men with money. Yet despite their efforts, the men were completely unfazed.

Maya refused to give up. It was said that men were greedy creatures. Since the four men were unmoved at the reward the girls had offered, maybe it meant that they were not bribing with the right amount yet.

Thus, she firmed her resolve and raised the price. "Ten million! Let us go and we'll reward you with ten million. How does that sound? If there's one thing Seet Group doesn't lack, it's money!"

Finally, two of the men turned around to look at the girls. One of them spoke up in an indifferent tone, "Forget ten million; we're not letting you go even if you offer us one billion! Just keep quiet and stay there."

What? They won't let us go even if we pay them one billion?

Maya was absolutely stunned. She was sorely tempted to ask them how much their salaries were if they could easily brush off one billion.

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Nina was also taken aback at how these men could be so calm even when being enticed with so much money. If it's not money they want, there must be something even more important that they care about.

"Are you worried about losing your lives if you let us go? Then you can always just take the money and leave this city! I'm sure Monica won't be able to pay you ten million even if you be her bodyguards for ten years!"

"You're right in that Monica will never give us ten million. However, it's only because we'll never take her money. As long as we can get revenge for Sam, we're more than willing to work with her!"

Maya and Nina were dumbfounded to hear that. Judging from his words, it almost sounded like they were all incredibly loyal to Monica's father.

No wonder they're unmoved by money! Seems like we'll need to come up with another plan!

Sophia went to Imperial Garden to visit Maya and Nina. When she heard that they had been called away by Nina's new skincare products teacher, she decided to wait for them. Yet an hour went by and there was still no sign of them returning. Anxiety swelled in her.

"Blake, when did they leave?"

Checking the time, Blake replied, "It's been two hours. They were already gone for an hour when you arrived, Ma'am."

Two hours...

Blake's answer unsettled her even more. She took out her phone and dialed the girls' numbers only to find that both their phones were turned off. She then had Blake call Nina's teacher, only to discover her phone was switched off too.

"They've all turned off their phones? Just what's going on here?" Sophia muttered to herself. An uneasy feeling coursed through her.

Blake thought it over for a few seconds before suggesting, "Could it be that they didn't want to be disturbed in the middle of the experiment?"

But is it really necessary to switch off their phones? It's just an experiment on the ingredients used in skincare products, isn't it?

By this point, Sophia was starting to panic. "Please don't let anything happen to them."

She had barely finished speaking when her phone rang. Seeing that it was from an unknown number, she hesitated briefly before answering.

"Hello. Who is this?"

"It's me!"

That voice... Sophia's heart clenched in her chest.

"Can you tell who I am? Do I have to give you a hint?"

"Monica Marston. It's you, isn't it?"

Even though the two women had not interacted much, Monica's voice had practically ingrained itself in Sophia's mind. How could it not when it had been echoing in her head the past few days? She could not forget how Monica sounded even if she tried.

"Not bad. Yes, it's me. Do you want to know why I'm calling you now?"

"You've already thought of how to get your revenge on the Seet family, right? Go on then, I'm listening."

Monica snickered. "Wrong. It's not that I've already thought of how to get my revenge; I've already made my move!"

"What? What do you mean?" Shock and horror appeared on Sophia's face.

Monica laughed coldly. "I have your two precious granddaughters with me."

In an instant, Sophia felt like she had been electrocuted. The color drained from her face as her mind went blank.

So that's why Maya, Nina, and her teacher's phones were all switched off! They've been kidnapped by Monica!

"Well? Are you surprised?" Monica asked gleefully.

"Y-You! What are you going to do to them? Let them go!"

"Let them go? It wasn't easy to get them, you know. Why should I let them go just because you say so?"

"What do you want then?"

"Wait for me at the café we met in last time. Let's have a little chat."

"Fine! Don't hurt them, you hear me? I'll head over right now!"

"I'll be waiting!"

A vicious smile curved Monica's lips as she hung up.

"Ms. Marston, do you think she'll bring some men with her to the café later?" one of her bodyguards queried worriedly. They had heard that Sophia Chinton was not someone to be underestimated.

"I'm not afraid of her even if she does. I wouldn't have dared to meet with her if I weren't sure I could handle her."

With that said, Monica confidently set off for the café with only two bodyguards.

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Since Monica had made the first move, Sophia realized that the younger woman had probably planned everything out. She knew that she had to be careful when dealing with the other woman. After some thought, she had Blake arrange for several strong bodyguards to come with her as she hurried to the café.

When she entered the café, Monica was already waiting for her in a private room.

Monica's eyes flashed when she noticed the four bodyguards following Sophia. Looks like she's already on her guard. I need to be cautious when I carry out my plan later.

"Monica, where are Nina and Maya?"

"Patience. Have a seat before we talk."

Sophia struggled to tamp down her anxiety and fury as she sat down primly.

Monica gave Sophia's bodyguards a pointed look. "Mrs. Seet, I wish to talk to you about certain events that happened in the past. Don't you think it necessary for them to leave before we do?"

In truth, Sophia did not want anybody else to know about what happened back then. After all, Jonathan and the Seet family's reputations were at stake. She glanced back at her bodyguards and ordered, "Wait for me outside."

"Yes, Ma'am."

The four bodyguards filed out of the room.

Now that it was only the two women, Sophia focused her attention on Monica. Her tone was even as she spoke up, "Go on then. Tell me what you want in return for freeing Maya and Nina."

"I have two conditions."

"What are they?"

"I want Seet Group to file for bankruptcy and Jonathan Seet to pay with his life!"

Sophia grimaced at the terms. Recalling what had happened all those years ago, she did her best to remain calm. "I admit that what happened to your father and Marston Group was because of Jonathan. We're willing to pay for what we did. However, could you set some other conditions? Seet Group has more than tens of thousands of employees depending on it for a living. If the company goes bankrupt, they'll all lose their jobs. Please, just think of it as doing a good deed and change your terms. As for my husband, could you not demand his life? Both of us are willing to atone for his sins. We'll do whatever you want of us."

"Whatever I want? Really?"

"Yes. As long as you let him live, we'll make amends some other way!"

Monica scrutinized the older woman intently. A few beats later, she stated, "You want me to let him live? Sure, then you can take his place! How about it? Your life for my father's life!"

She wants my life? So either way, she wants the Seet family to lose a life for our sins.

Sophia was well aware that what happened back then had to be resolved one way or the other. If it would stop anyone else from being involved in this and let the Seet family live peacefully, she would happily give up her life.

"Monica, all this ends with my death, alright?"

"Hah, as if! You're only dying on behalf of Jonathan for my father's death! Only Seet Group going bankrupt will even things out for what happened to Marston Group!"

Sophia fell silent for several long moments. Then, she stared Monica straight in the eye. "Monica, must you really drive the Seet family into a corner?"

"Yes! The more you Seets suffer, the better! Only seeing all of you in desperation can soothe the hatred in my heart! In fact, I hope your family is utterly destroyed! Then, and only then, can my father rest in peace! I'm sure he'll be pleased to see that I've avenged him."

Taking in the crazed look on Monica's face, Sophia understood that the former had been completely blinded by her hatred and thirst for vengeance. At this point, all the other woman could think about was how to make the Seet family pay. Nothing Sophia said would get through to her. Thus, there was no point in discussing this further.

"Monica, don't even think about leaving without letting Nina and Maya go! I've already given instructions to my bodyguards earlier. I'm certain they've already gotten rid of your two bodyguards by now. The only way you're walking out this door is if you tell me where my granddaughters are!"

Monica had not expected Sophia to do something like that. Despite that, there was not the slightest hint of fear on her face as she gazed at the older woman. Abruptly, she scoffed. "I had heard about how you were a woman who shouldn't be underestimated. Yet, I honestly had not thought you would have the guts to come up with a plan to deal with me even as we're negotiating!"

"I'm doing this for my granddaughters! Monica, just tell me where they are. I'll send some men over to pick them up and bring them home. Once I'm assured that they're safe and sound, I won't pursue this matter further!"

After all, what happened to the Marston family truly was the Seet family's fault.

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A sly look flashed past Monica's eyes before she nodded. "Alright, I'll tell you."

She moved closer to Sophia before suddenly holding up a finger. Sophia found herself drawn to the strange design on Monica's finger. Then, the finger began to move side to side quickly. Sophia felt her head spinning as her gaze remained locked on the finger. She could not seem to look away no matter how hard she tried. A few seconds later, all thoughts left her mind and she was left standing there dumbly. Her eyes stared off into space, blank and dull.

Monica took in the dazed look on the hypnotized Sophia before her lips quirked into a pleased smirk. "Go tell your bodyguards that you're coming with me to see Maya and Nina. Send them back home without you."

Sophia instantly turned around and headed outside. She dutifully repeated her orders to her bodyguards.

"Ma'am, you're asking us to go back first? You really want to go with her all alone?" her bodyguards expressed their concerns.

"Yes. Now. return home."

With that said, Sophia followed after Monica, who had just exited the private room and was walking off.

One of the bodyguards piped up in alarm, "Why would Ma'am suddenly order us back home without her? Didn't she warn us about how that Monica woman was incredibly sly and to be careful before we came?"

"Yeah. I got the feeling something was off about Ma'am too."

After a brief discussion, the bodyguards decided to follow the two women. However, when they exited the café, Monica and Sophia were nowhere to be seen.

"Where are they? They shouldn't be gone so quickly!"

"Maybe they're hiding somewhere? Let's search around!"

The bodyguards spread out to look for the missing women. Unfortunately, there was no sign of Sophia anywhere near the café. Since Evan was not in town, they had no other choice but to call Davin and report to him.

Meanwhile, Davin was seated at the desk in the president's office. A terrible headache pounded at his temples as he stared at the mountain of documents waiting to be reviewed.

"Damn it, Evan! If you're really going to be gone for seven months, I'm doomed! To think I had been planning on outshining you while you were gone! Just looking at all these never-ending documents is giving me a headache! You know what, I give up on doing better than you. At this rate, I'm just hoping I won't ruin the company in your absence. I'll never be able to look you in the eyes if that happened!"

Right as he finished muttering to himself, his phone rang loudly.

The moment he accepted the call, a man's voice blared through the speakers.

"Mr. Davin, something bad has happened!"

"What is it?"

"Ma'am's missing! We don't know where she went!"

"What did you say? Did you just say my Mom's missing? What do you mean?"

The bodyguard truthfully recounted the earlier events. When he finished speaking, Davin cried out in agitation, "How could something like that happen? Who is this Monica Marston?"

"We have no idea, Mr. Davin. Our gut instincts are telling us something is wrong here. We're worried about Ma'am, which is why we decided to inform you. Maybe we're just overthinking things and she'll be back home in a while?"

"Okay, I got it! Honestly, you four! My Mom brought you with her to protect her! How could you just stand by and watch her go off with some stranger! What were you thinking!"

"Mr. Davin, we weren't sure what was happening then either! It's just that we thought that Monica woman had acted a little oddly."

"Ugh, fine! There's no point in continuing this conversation. Let me call my Dad and talk to him first."

Davin ended the call but did not get a chance to dial Jonathan's number when his phone chimed again.

Answering the call, he said impatiently, "What is it? Hurry up and speak!"

"Are you Davin Seet?"

"Yes. Who are you?"

"I have Nina, Maya, and your mother. Do you want to save them?"

"What did you say? Who the hell are you?"

Monica chuckled and replied, "Go ask your father; I'm sure he'll tell you all about me. If you want your nieces and mother to remain safe, you'll have to do as I say."

"What do you want?"

"It's simple, really. I want you to ruin Seet Group!"

"What? Are you insane? Which mental asylum did you escape from, you crazy woman?"

"Oh, trust me when I say I'm even more terrifying than any mental asylum patient! You'd better do as I say or I'll make sure they suffer!" The call ended immediately after that.

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Davin was shocked. This woman must be out of her mind to want to take down Seet Group. Who does she think she is?

But then something struck him. He thought about what the bodyguard had said about his mom leaving with Monica.

Could this crazy woman be Monica?

With that thought in mind, he rang Jonathan immediately to ask him about this Monica woman.

Jonathan was not prepared to disclose his past to Davin, hence he simply replied, "That sounds like a downright crazy person, so just ignore her."

"I wish I can just ignore her, but she has taken Mom, Nina and Maya hostage! How can we just sit down and do nothing about it?"

This unexpected news frightened Jonathan, making him so dizzy he had to hold on to his bookshelf.

Nina, Maya and Sophia are all abducted by Monica?

But, how is this possible?

"Are you absolutely sure about this? How did she manage to kidnap all of them?" Jonathan was still stunned.

"From what I gathered from the Imperial Garden bodyguards, Nina and Maya were lured away by her. As for Mom, apparently she just went with Monica willingly."

"What? Your mom followed her voluntarily? She must have gone mad!"

Jonathan could not, for the life of him, figure out why Sophia would go with Monica freely. She should know better than stepping into an obvious death trap.

"I'm not sure about mom, but that Monica woman is absolutely insane! She said she wants the Seet Group wiped out, and if we refuse, we'll be sorry for what she'll do to Nina, Maya, and Mom!" Davin's voice was desperate. "Why do you think she said that, Dad?"

Jonathan felt overwhelmed.

His memory was still fresh from this morning when he and Sophia were plotting plans to guard against Monica. He was totally unprepared for things to get out of hand so quickly. It seemed that Monica was way ahead of them.

"Monica is our enemy. But what's more important now is to search for your mom and the kids! Meanwhile, you must hold down the fort at the company. If Monica gets her hands on the company we're all done for," Jonathan said firmly on the other end of the line.

Our enemy?

This was the first time Davin had learned of someone being the enemy of his family.

He fell deep in thought. The way Monica had taken everyone by surprise by abducting three members from his family in such a short period baffled him. He could not help but keep pressing on his father about the origin of this woman.

The words almost escaped Jonathan's lips, but he decided to hold back. "Enough questions for now, Davin. Just start looking for your mom, Nina, and Maya." Jonathan hung up the phone before his son could ask more questions.

Davin furrowed his brows. He wondered why his father stopped short of explaining everything to him. Surely if he knew more about the woman, his search would be more efficient.

"Sir, the Hidden Masters are still here. Why don't we assign this task to them? After all, this is their specialty," John suggested.

"All right, you get them started right now. If there's any news, let me know at once."

"Yes sir," John answered while rushing out of the president office.

Davin was anxious. "Damn that Monica! She couldn't have chosen a worse time. If anything were to happen to the kids or the Seet Group, how am I going to be able to explain this to Evan when he's back?"

He let out a heavy sigh.

Meanwhile, Monica took Sophia back to her laboratory. Nina and Maya were surprised to see their grandmother.

"Grandma!"

"Grandma, not you too!"

Sophia walked quietly toward them and sat down, emotionless. Feeling worn out, she shut her eyes.

"What's wrong, Grandma? Are you okay?" Maya shook Sophia's arm.

"She's fine. She'll feel better after a short nap," Monica said while squinting at Sophia.

Her face lit up with the joy of a victor.

With Evan away, this was the perfect window of opportunity she had been waiting for.

Things had gone better than she expected. She had captured three members from the Seet family single-handedly. Jonathan and Davin were lucky and got away this time. But that turned out to work in her favor; once the Seet Group was destroyed in their own hands, she would resume her plan to take them all down.

Monica could not wait to see the agony on Evan's face when he discovered that both Seet Group and his family were gone. She would then finish him off with ease.