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FOR WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE

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Angelica sat next to Lady Justice in the wood-panelled attorney's office. The leather chairs were deep and comfortable. There were some other people on their side of the room that Angelica didn't recognize at all; she was sure they were thinking the same of the tall Hispanic chick in dark glasses. She'd armored up that morning: patent leather pumps that boosted her to six foot two, knee-length black pencil skirt, red silk blouse with neckline that allowed her mightiest bra to serve the girls up front and center, black damask cutaway mock-tailcoat, and full-on femme face with lipstick that matched the blouse and her nails. She'd blown her black hair out to full supermodel-in-the-wind volume and clasped on her grandmother's best garnet necklace with the dramatic drop that pointed straight to her cleavage.

Lady J was armored up too, she was amused to note, but in her own way. The iron-gray bob was impeccable, and she was wearing the Lady Justice costume that was closest to an Army uniform, in navy blue with the stars-n-stripes "ladies" tie and the Lady J balance insignia pinned to her lapel. Lady J was even wearing makeup, the kind of nearly transparent makeup that took about ten years off her age and made her blue eyes even more piercing than usual.

An elderly white man in an expensive grey suit sat behind the broad antique desk. There was a much younger South Asian man standing unobtrusively to his right — his paralegal or intern, Angelica guessed. They handed a small piece of paper to everyone in the room that was a legal statement about Lady J's power and the necessity of having her in the room for the reading (stipulated by Jane's will, apparently) and that anyone could feel free to leave if they did not consent to her power, and the lawyers would contact them later.

No one left.

The lawyer looked over his gold wire-rim glasses at the assemblage and made Angelica feel like she was sitting in a BBC mystery series. "Thank you all for coming. I am Ms. Liberty's attorney, Charles Worthgate. Have been, for several decades now. You have all been asked

here because you are part of Ms. Liberty's last will and testament, which, I will note, she updated only a few weeks ago."

"How did she do *that*?" asked a blonde, middle-aged white woman who looked like she'd bitten into a few thousand lemons in her time.

"By temporary sanity order, duly processed and certified," Worthgate smoothly replied. He'd probably been expecting the question. "Before we begin, I need to ask a question—" he turned and looked directly at Angelica "—of Ms. Luna here."

Angelica cleared her throat and said, "Yes?" in a voice that she hoped was unconcerned.

"Did Ms. Liberty find you before she died?" he said.

Angelica grimaced at the memory and said, "Yes, yes she did."

"And was she in her right mind, do you think, when she found you?" he pursued.

Angelica traded a glance with Lady Justice, and said, "Yes, I think she was."

"That's fine then," he said, nodding.

His assistant turned away and brought back a sheaf of papers to set before Mr. Worthgate. From Angelica's angle, she could tell that there were two distinct stacks of papers. *Oho*, she thought. *That's the version for if she hadn't found me and dumped this on me. Well, maybe I'll get a few dollars at least.*

Worthgate flipped through the first couple of pages and nodded. "Right, all right then."

He began to read the will. Angelica mostly tuned it out, because she expected some... set of collectibles or something, really. The sour blonde woman was a cousin of Jane's from her father's side of the family. The woman's face when she heard her legacy—Angelica thought, *Oh, honey, 500 grand is nothing to sneer at*—led Angelica to believe that perhaps she'd expected to get everything.

She perked up when Lady J's turn came though: "To Dorothy Sanderson, who has always been my dearest and most long-suffering friend, I know you will not permit me to leave you personally a sum of money. Instead, I leave you the control of the Lady Justice Foundation, which position will pay you a minimum annual salary of \$100,000 for the rest of your life, and will enable you to create modest grants for whatever purposes you deem best."

Lady Justice laughed and hiccupped around a sob. "Damn you, Janey," she muttered.

Angelica had already noticed a trend for Jane's legacies to draw out some form of obscenity.

Worthgate glanced up over his wire-rims in her direction and said, "And to Angelica Luna, whose affection and generosity I have repaid with great trouble, I leave the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, to use or dispose of as she will."

Angelica blinked.

There was an eruption of outcries on the other side of the room.

Lady J took her hand and squeezed without looking at her.

Angelica blinked again.

The attorney occupied himself with assuring Jane's jilted next-of-kin that the will was entirely legal, yes, including the temporary sanity certificate. The next-of-kin was saying some things

that she was probably regretting as soon as they came out of her mouth, since she wasn't used to the best way to avoid being influenced by Lady J's power: not saying anything at all.

Angelica blinked a third time and found the very nice-looking South Asian man at her side. "If you would care to step into my office, Ms. Luna, I can help give you more perspective on this, as I can see that you are surprised."

Office? Angelica thought. She stood up automatically, and Lady J came with her because she hadn't let go of Lady J's hand. Lady J squeezed her hand again and accompanied her into the hallway and thence into another wood-panelled office.

They settled into the comfortable silence of his office and the identical leather chairs, and he leaned against his desk and smiled. "I'm Anirvan Das, one of the partners. Mr. Worthgate asked me to look after you, if you don't mind."

"No, of course not," Angelica said, taking a moment to actually focus on his face, rather than the blur of Life! all around him. He still looked too young to be a partner, without a sign of either lines at the corners of his eyes or grey in his very black hair. *Well, maybe he was a child prodigy.*

Lady Justice remained silent, just holding Angelica's hand.

"I expect you're probably wondering what, exactly, being Ms. Liberty's residuary beneficiary means in terms of dollars," Das said, smiling. His suit was at least as expensive as Worthgate's, Angelica thought, eyeing the custom cut that fitted his shoulders rather beautifully. His cufflinks—gold with tiny diamonds set in them—winked at her from under the cuff of his jacket.

"The thought *had* occurred to me," Angelica said, adding, "Not very much, I expect, given the size of some of the other legacies."

He pursed his lips and reached behind him for a sticky pad and pen. He wrote something on the top sheet, pulled it off, and handed it over to her. "That's according to an estimate our firm made at the end of last week."

Angelica looked down at the yellow square of paper stuck to her fingertip. That *couldn't* be right. There were so many zeroes. *How many zeroes?* She counted. *Really?*

She realized that she'd stopped breathing a few moments before, and let out a rush of air and inhaled.

"You have to remember that Ms. Liberty didn't touch her money at all for nearly a decade," Das said kindly. "She gave carte blanche to her very capable investors long ago, and only drew a relatively small monthly allowance when she was, er, at liberty. Her investors and media management arranged multiple licensing deals over the years, and many of those pay a significant regular fee. And so on, and so forth."

Angelica counted over the zeroes for the third time, then looked up at him over her sunglasses. "Are you *sure* about this?"

Das gave her a dazzlingly pretty smile. "Oh, yes, Ms. Luna. I did have my assistants triple-check their numbers. I wanted to give you the most accurate information I could. I note that we have seen a significant uptick in licensing income since Ms. Liberty's death, so this number could change by the end of the month, but only in terms of growth."

She slumped back in her seat and looked at Lady Justice with wide eyes. "I guess I'm... rich?"

Lady Justice patted her hand and smiled. "Rather ridiculously rich, I'm afraid."