

## **The Glasses**

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The President stood in front of his mirror, fixing his tie as he prepared to face another day at the office. One thought kept distracting him from getting the knot perfect. That old man's shifty eyes as the motorcade passed through a rough looking part of the city yesterday. The old man couldn't have known which car he was riding in, for all the cars had black tinted windows. Nonetheless, the old man glared at the car the president was actually in, looking contemptuous and hateful. He yelled something at the car, but the sound was muffled by the bullet-proof glass. The threatening looks were definitely aimed at him. Threats and hate came with his profession, but for some reason he couldn't shake off the look on that man's face.

A knock pulled the President back to reality quite abruptly. It was his wife, carrying a small box in her hands with the blue seal on top. It signified the box had gone through security and was harmless.

"How are you doing?" His wife questioned him. She knew something was wrong with him from his detached behavior.

"I'm okay. What's in the box?" He abandoned all efforts at tying his tie and turned to face her.

"I don't know. Omar just handed it in," she said as she handed him the box. Omar was the head of his security detail.

He opened the box silently and found a pair of glasses folded in a note. Intrigued, he held the note up and read,

Things aren't what they seem to be. Wear the glasses for a day. Watch what's happening under your nose.

The note wasn't signed. It was really weird. Security usually don't pass him this kind of thing. Nonetheless, he put on the glasses. Nothing happened. His wife was looking at him expectantly.

"What? What is it?"

"Someone sent me those glasses along with that note," he replied. He passed her the note and watched as she skimmed it.

"Should I talk to Omar? This looks highly suspicious! Why are you wearing those glasses?"

"They can't possibly cause any harm. Besides, I am in need of a new pair of glasses," he shrugged. He was feeling a little down, which brought the desire of being reckless.

He smiled at his wife, who was looking at him incredulously, and walked out of the room.

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After reading that note, something clicked in the President's mind. An unexpected change in the wirings of his brain had taken place. He was determined to know what that note meant and who it was from.

He decided a surprise visit to the ministry was in order. So he addressed his driver directly. The driver, surprised at this sudden change in location, said, "But Mr. President! The security arrangements and the—"

"It's okay, Youssef. I'm pretty sure the standards of security are something I don't have to worry about."

The driver didn't speak again, even though he was reluctant about following his president's words. The President, meanwhile, looked at his reflection in the mirror. The black rimmed glasses looked like they belonged on his face. He raked a hand through his silvery hair and sighed. It looked like he'd aged more in two years than in the rest of his life, and not only because he'd gained a few more silver hairs.

In the reflection, the President could also see his PA giving him weird looks. He turned around, catching the middle-aged man off guard.

"How- How are you doing, Mr. President?"

"I'm alright, Ali. I need for you to call Omar. Tell him it's a surprise visit."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Just tell him I said this."

"Yes sir." Ali got to work on his cell phone.

The President's arrival was a cause of upheaval at the ministry, but not right away. Omar got the job done perfectly, as usual. He was a responsible man. The President got out of his black car and headed straight to his Prime Minister's office, Omar and his security detail hot on his heels. Up the stairs they all went and down several corridors

until they reached a large mahogany door. The president turned, signaling for his detail to stay put. He buttoned up his suave suit, knocked once and walked right in.

The Prime Minister, taken aback, stood up from his leather seat. He was a portly man of about fifty. He had good experience with leadership and politics, which made him a perfect candidate for the job he currently occupied. Not for long, thought the President, for he had seen the reason why the old man was glaring at him right in front of his eyes.

“So, how many are those? Five million? Nope, they look like ten.”

“Mr. President! I didn’t expect you to be here.”

“Neither did I expect him to be here.” The President nodded at the tall man sitting in front of the Prime Minister’s desk. He was a well-known business man named Mustafa, who ran a multi-million empire about to go downhill.

Mustafa, contrary to what the president – or any sane person for that matter – expected, was unfazed. He stood up and walked over to the President. He extended a hand to him, but the President was too busy gawking at the situation in front of him. When Mustafa realized it was useless, he dropped his hand back to his side and gave the president a smile, then he said, “Things aren’t what they seem to be.”

The President looked at him intently, then moved his eyes to meet the Prime Minister’s confused ones. Mustafa patted the president’s shoulder, whispering, “Don’t they look good on you,” and walked away.

The glasses, though producing a subtle change, were the reason for a far greater one.

The old man smiled at the black cars in the motorcade, and the president smiled back, even if the man couldn't see him.

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