

Chapter 232 Taekwondo

The competition already started as soon as the men drove off.

Rylan's car could have overtaken Rayan's multiple times, but he held himself back for safety reasons.

At one point, when he was about to finally overtake, Rayan rolled his window down and called out to him, "Whoever arrives at the PY Taekwondo Gym first will win the first round."

That was all Rylan needed to know. He stepped on the accelerator and sped past Rayan's car without hesitation.

But Rayan was not to be outdone. His engine roared as he gunned it down the road.

This was something a man craved now and then—speed and action in the streets.

As they drew toward the entrance of their destination, both cars eased to a stop.

The men got out of their vehicles at the same time, then shared one long glance before striding into the gym.

Rylan surveyed the location. He had never been here before, and it was relatively smaller than the ones he was accustomed to.

The men entered the lockers and changed into doboks. Finally, it was time to get into the ring.

"So you're not only good at boxing, but at taekwondo as well," Rylan remarked. Shocked as he was, he was careful not to let it show.

"There are a lot of other things you don't know about me," Rayan said smugly, his chin raised.

"Before we begin, I want to ask you this—what are you fighting for?" Rylan was aware that Rayan had another woman living in his villa, and that she was pregnant.

If so, then why was he bothering his ex-wife and preventing her from seeking her own happiness? Wasn't that a little too much?

"Let's talk about that later." After saying that, Rayan raised his leg and went straight for Rylan's chest. He was so fast, the other man barely saw him move.

Fortunately, Rylan was able to dodge in the nick of time, rolling to the side. Once he got back on his feet, he tried to land a kick on Rayan's leg.

Rayan leaped out of the way, then launched another attack of his own.

They were both skilled fighters, and curious onlookers could barely keep track of the way their bodies maneuvered around each other.

Since both Rylan and Rayan were black belt holders, it wasn't easy to determine the winner of the competition right away. By the end of it, they both sustained injuries on their faces.

They now lay on the mat, drenched in sweat

and panting heavily.

"Can you tell me now?" Rylan spoke first. In truth, he already had an answer in mind, he just wasn't willing to acknowledge it. As long as it remained unspoken, he could still pursue Janessa without misgivings.

But if Rayan's answer turned out to be what Rylan thought it was, then things would be very awkward and embarrassing, indeed.

"It's nothing much," Rayan quipped. "I just don't like you." He stood up abruptly and walked out of the ring, wiping his sweat as he went.

"You like Janessa, don't you?" Rylan called out. "That's why you don't want her to be with other men." He really hated Rayan's attitude and approach to this matter.

Everything about him—his eyes, his actions, his mood swings—were enough proof that he still had lingering feelings for his ex-wife.

Yet Rayan never admitted it, not to himself, or to other people.

'Why the hell is he denying it? What is he afraid of?'

"Like her?" Rayan echoed, his voice dripping with disgust. "If I really liked her, do you think you'd be able to leave this place on your own two legs?" He was outraged by the mere suggestion. Him? Like Janessa? Impossible!

"So you don't like her at all? Since this is the case, I hope you would refrain from disrupting her private life any further. You're just colleagues now, nothing more. I don't want to see her unhappy." As Rylan said this, the memory of Janessa cooking especially for Rayan flashed in his mind.

Even though she had also cooked him a full meal just an hour ago, the meaning behind the gesture was different.

He'd had to ask Janessa to cook for him, while she had willingly cooked for Rayan without needing any coaxing.

It was evident that Rayan still held a space in Janessa's heart. He still mattered to her. Rylan, on the other hand, was a newcomer who couldn't even get past her walls. What did he have to do for her to let him in?

Janessa was a good wife, and she would no doubt make a good mother in the future. She deserved to be cherished and cared for, but Rayan had never treated her properly.

In any case, she was Rylan's favorite person in the world. It was only natural for him to want to protect her.

It was a responsibility of sorts, and he took the task to heart.

"And why should I listen to you?" Rayan sneered. "We aren't mere colleagues. Janessa is my personal assistant. It's perfectly normal for us to see each other after work. And it's normal for her to cook for me, too. You can chase after her all you want. Let's see if she actually chooses you in the end!" Rayan was confident that Janessa had rejected Rylan. If they were truly together, Rylan definitely would have been more violent now.

One was her ex-husband, and the other was her admirer who stood no chance. What was the difference between the two?

"Your sudden appearance back there upset her," Rylan said through gritted teeth. His temples throbbed. He was livid.

Rayan couldn't see into the kitchen from the dining hall, but Rylan had a clear view from the living room. He had seen Janessa mutter to herself as she cleaned the dishes. Though he couldn't hear her words, it was obvious from her expression that she was far from pleased with their uninvited guest.

"It's none of your business whether I upset her or not, or if I decide to see her after work. You might be the eldest grandson of the Feng family, but you still need to watch yourself. Your family will never allow you to marry a divorcee. For your sake, you had better reconsider your intentions and just give up! Don't bring shame upon your elders."

Needless to say, Rayan's words didn't have their desired effect. Rylan was never going to give up on Janessa.

"That may be true, but my family affairs are none of your business, either. Regardless of what they think, I won't let it slide if you keep hurting Janessa like this. The moment I learn that you're bullying her again, I will dispense with any courtesy I have toward you." If, indeed, push came to shove, Rylan was determined to teach the other man a lesson.

"You're welcome to try," Rayan drawled. He was impervious to threats; he was the one doling them out to others, not the other way around.

"I'm telling you now, Rayan, no matter what my family thinks, I won't let you hurt Janessa even just a little. And if you still have some semblance of a conscience in you, you will stay away from her from now on. Your distance is the greatest tolerance for her."

Rylan thought back to his conversation with Alana, and the rage inside him burned even brighter. This was also part of the reason why he had wanted an opportunity to physically beat Rayan up.

Not only had Rayan neglected Janessa when she had gotten pregnant, but she also had to suffer alone when she lost the baby.

And the entire time, Rayan was with another woman. He hadn't even cared whether Janessa lived or died.

"Tolerance? What a joke. If you want to keep pursuing her, then that's up to you. But if you really want to protect her, then we can only be enemies." Rayan's tone was cold and domineering.

Without waiting for a response, he turned around and left Rylan alone in the gym.

For a long time after that, Rylan vented his fury on a sandbag hanging in the corner of the room. He didn't stop until he was utterly exhausted, his hair dripping with sweat. He lay flat on the floor for a while, staring blankly at the ceiling.

Then he collected himself and left the gym.