

107 No longer single.

Arwen opened her mouth to defend herself, but no words came out of her. "So, your plan was to get me on her wrong side?" she asked, though she wasn't truly believing it. It was just a playful tease. 1

Her grandmother hummed in response, as casually as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world—as if conspiring against her precious granddaughter were her second nature. "Of course! After all, I need to keep you on my side. I can't let my precious granddaughter change her favourites, after all."

Arwen locked her jaws, fighting the urge to roll her eyes. "No wonder Mom is so smart. She has, after all, taken after you."

"Who said that?" Offended, the old woman's voice turned sharply, her voice laced with mockery. "She may be cunning, but she is nowhere near my level. Your mother's idea of persuasion is nagging and pressuring you until you give in. A lack of finesse, if you truly ask me!"



A chuckle slipped out from Arwen. "I see. And you think luring my parents away on a false business trip shows finesse?"

"Ungrateful brat, now don't act like you weren't grateful," Brenda shot back, a hint of smirk audible in her tone. "I simply levelled the ground for you, dear. Your mother may want you to settle down with that not-so-handsome boy she chose for you, but I believe you deserved better than a life controlled by her expectations."

Arwen's expression softened. There was nothing to retort. Her grandmother's methods might be questionable, but Arwen knew deep down that it was all out of her genuine love and protectiveness.

And to be honest, if she hadn't played that trick, it would have been hard to escape from her mother's plans. And not to mention, if not for that trick, she might also have missed this chance with Aiden. And that alone would have been the biggest loss she would have suffered.

"Thank you, Granna," she whispered softly, a slight crack in her voice betraying the emotion she tried to hold back.



Brenda's chuckle softened, and the warmth in her voice deepened. "Wennie, I just want you to understand that no one deserves the power to make you feel small, least of all your mother. I know you think that in the world only I have the courage and power to challenge your mother. But believe me, you are wrong. You hold that power and authority better than me. And maybe not now, but in the future, you might find it back."

Arwen felt her grandmother was simply comforting her, giving her the courage to face her mother in future. But she had a big misunderstanding in that, A misunderstanding that she might only understand later with time.

A comfortable silence stretched between them for a moment. But soon, Brenda's voice broke through, getting cheerful again.

"Okay, enough of serious talks. Tell me what should I do or plan next to save you from the next setup?" she asked, almost excited to jump back into action. "I am sure the day your mother returns, she will be again out to arrange another date. I need to be prepared for it beforehand. Tell me, what should I do this time? I gave her

business once; should I take one away this time? Will that be enough to keep her busy?"

She asked and Arwen shook her head with a smile. "While that sounds like a great idea, Granna, I don't think that will be necessary anymore."

A brief silence settled over the call before Brenda's voice returned, sounding slightly perplexed. "Wennie, don't tell me you are ready to settle down with that boy. That Foster kid is not good enough for you. He might have some handful achievements, but he definitely is not capable of keeping you happy."

"Granna, Ryan is —"

Before she could say anything, Brenda cut in, "Or don't tell me all my words just now fell on deaf ears. You are not considering settling for your mother's expectations, are you?" she paused, then continued, "Don't let my efforts go waste. It might seem easy, but I had to bear the cost. And Wennie, you know how stingy I get over my hard-earned money. I don't like to waste it, not even on my own daughter."

Arwen scratched the corner of her brows,

stifling a laugh. "Granna, that's not what I mean. Will you at least let me explain?"

"If not that, then what else is your plan?" the old woman asked.

And Arwen took a deep breath before answering, "What I mean is, you can save your finesse. It won't be required —not any longer. I will handle it myself this time."

"And how are you going to do that?"

Arwen paused for a moment, contemplating something in her thoughts. She had no major plans, but the one she had was enough to rule out any chances her mother would turn to create with Ryan. So, she was confident about it.

"What is it, Wennie? Tell me." Brenda asked again, her voice losing the playful tone it had carried all this while.

And once again, Arwen was not surprised. She was well aware of her grandmother's ability to shift gears. After all, the old lady has single-handedly managed an empire for years, in ways even young, capable men couldn't. She was an ace player in the business world and the



perfect role model for any woman at home.

"Granna, I knew what Mom's plans would be for me the moment she returned, so the day I escaped, I took the liberty of making a few preparations of my own." 1

While Arwen paused, Brenda urged her to continue, her tone unmistakably serene. "Go on!"

Arwen cleared her throat before finally saying, "I got married, Granna. Now, with my status no longer single, Mom has no way to set me up with Ryan again. She can no longer push me to settle with her plans, or control me." 6