

125 It's not my fault.

Giving his words of advice, Michael turned to leave. His footsteps echoed down the hospital corridor. Left alone, Delyth bit her lip as frustration simmered beneath the surface. She had wanted to celebrate her small victory, but Michael's words gnawed at her, reminding her of the truth she was trying to ignore — Ryan wasn't doing this just for her.

She might have forced herself to believe otherwise, but deep down, she knew that behind it all, his only real intention was to get Arwen back beside him.

"Why, Ryan? Why?" Delyth's fingers clenched tightly around the sheets. "Arwen has finally left you for good. Why can't you leave her too? Didn't you say that you don't love her? Then what is this obsession? Why are you so obsessed with him? Why?"

Her eyes darkened, filling with bitterness as she gritted her teeth. A look of resolve heartened on her face. "Fine. Even if you don't admit it, nothing changes now. I already lost my dream and dance, but I won't lose you. I will make you mine, whether you want to see it or not."

She took a steadying breath as a fire of determination burned in her gaze. "After all, I have no one else in this world. You are the only one I can depend on, and you will understand that, Ryan. You can't brush me aside. Not after all that I have done and lost just to get you in my life. I have to become the future Mrs. Foster and that will only happen when I remove Arwen and get myself in the position of your wife." 4

Delyth muttered to herself as she leaned back. Her eyes fixed on the ceiling, as she pictured her next steps. It took her a while to make Ryan accept the thing that had happened between them. Now with that accepted, getting her gal would no longer be as difficult as before.

"Arwen, just wait and see. You might act arrogant today, but tomorrow I would love to see how you will act arrogant when you see me as Mrs. Foster tomorrow."

Back at Winslow Residence, Arwen was in the middle of a call with her father's secretary when she heard his voice faintly in the background.

"George, do you have an update? Did you check into what I had asked you to?"

"Mr. Quinn, it's Ms. Quinn is on the line. She called for you but since you were busy in the meeting, I took her call."

As Arwen listened to the small conversation, she heard a small rustle, and she knew the phone had already been passed to her father.

"Dad!" she greeted but the warm endearment she had expected didn't come in return. Instead what came was Idris's gruff voice

"Arwen, what is going on there? Why am I only learning about these things through the internet? First, you were harassed outside the hospital –and I came to know only when Cole called and informed me. And now, today, Ryan has made such a public statement, and again, I read about it online. Are you going to tell me what is happening?" Idris's voice came low but laced with anger –an anger that he was trying to suppress deeply inside. 2

Arwen had an inkling that her father had already been briefed, and she sighed, choosing her words carefully. "Dad, I was planning to tell you everything after you and Mom returned, but I only just learned from George that your trip has gotten extended for a few more days. How about we wait until ..."

"We are coming tomorrow," Idris cut in and his voice came firm.

Arwen was taken aback. "But Dad, your business trip ... I mean if it hadn't been important, you wouldn't have extended it. Mom, might not agree

...

"Arwen, I have already settled it all. The rest will be handled by George here. I and your Mom will be leaving today and we will be back home by tomorrow. So, we are discussing this without any delay."

Arwen's heart sank. She hadn't wanted to delay the conversation, but she had hoped to reveal the truth about her marriage in a calmer situation. She never expected it to unfold in the midst of some mess."

Idris's voice softened a bit, as though sensing her unease. "Arwen, what Ryan did is unforgivable. If I understand correctly, he was publicly defending another woman while deliberately putting you in contempt. How dare he? And what does he mean when he says that he had feelings for that woman back in university? As far as I have remember it was during the starting year of your university when the Fosters came to officialize your engagement

with him. Does that mean he had someone else in his heart while he was making promises to you?"

"Dad, I —" Arwen's voice faltered as she searched for the right words. But before she could respond, she heard another rustle on the line. Then her mother's voice came through, all cold and sharp.

"Arwen, what going on there? Why is Delyth back?" Catrin's voice dripped with disappointment, sending a chill down Arwen's spine. "Didn't I already help you put her in place last time? I told you to pay closer attention to ensure Ryan wouldn't look back at her. How could you let her step back into the picture? When will you learn, Arwen? Can't you for once make things right?" 4

Arwen's fingers tightened around her phone as frustration bubbled up, directed not just at her mother's relentless expectations but also at her own unending attempts to live up to them. Why can't her mother side up with her for once? Why does she always blame it on her? 1

"Mom, it's not my fault," she said, no longer able to take the blame for things she wasn't responsible for.



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As if Catrin hadn't expected her to shrug off the blame was slightly taken aback. "What did you say?"

Arwen took a steadying breath, as she calmed herself before meeting her mother's words with her hard, unyielding tone. "I had told you the previous day itself —Ryan and I are over. It's not my fault and I won't take the blame for getting you disappointed all over again. Not this time, at least."

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