



93 Because this was never about us.

Ryan didn't know why it hurt so much, when back then he didn't even care to put that ring on Arwen. ¹

But seeing her without it today, made pure rage boil in his veins. He lost not just his composure but also his control. "Why did you do that?" he asked, tightening his hold painfully on her shoulders.

Arwen's eyes shut as she fought to hold back the cry of pain that was almost there on her lips. She wouldn't allow him to see her in the pain —not even the one he was inflicting on her.

For a moment, she let the silence linger between them, feeling the heat of his anger, his grip suffocating her shoulders. It felt ridiculous —his anger felt even more ridiculous. But instead of giving in to the emotions swirling inside her, she steadied her breath before opening her eyes to meet his gaze with an icy resolve.

"Let go of me," her words came more like a



command, cold and unwavering. It wasn't a plea, but an order.

Ryan faltered for a second as if he hadn't expected her to respond with such force.

"Arwen, you—" he started, but she cut him off.

"You think this is about the ring?" She straightened her posture, her strength radiating through her defiance. Although Ryan's hands remained on her shoulders, they no longer held the strength they held before. Her gaze darted to look at them before continuing, "You are angry because for the first time in your life, something happened that you haven't expected. Something that you feel you no longer have the control over. I am no longer in your control. But guess what, Ryan?" She leaned closer, her eyes narrowing with sharp intensity. "You never held any control. Not over me, at least. I was just too liberal around you to make you think that you did. But I cut you off that special privilege the day you chose someone else over me —to save someone else over me. "

Ryan's jaw clenched as he stared at her, struggling to maintain his dominance. But all of



It seemed futile —Arwen didn't look the same woman he had come to know over the years.

His grip loosened further, and Arwen seized the moment to shrug them off, stepping back to create a distance between them. Ryan wanted to reach out, to hold her again, but she wasn't going to allow him.

"It doesn't matter whether I wear it or take this off my finger," Arwen motioned towards the velvet box with the ring inside, "because this was never about us. It was never about you. Back then, you haven't bothered to place it on my finger, and now you hold the audacity to act as though it meant something?" 2

Ryan's gaze darkened, his fists clenched. "Arwen, you know what meaning this ring holds. This is our family heirloom and —"

"Yes, I know," Arwen nodded. "But it seems like you forgot that I am no longer your fiancée. The Foster family's heirloom has got nothing to do with me anymore and neither do you," she said with a tone of finality.

Ryan stood still, his fists unclenching, as if her words had cut him deeper than any rage he



could muster. "You —" he began, but was abruptly cut off.

"Arwen!" Beca Foster's voice interrupted from behind. "You have come?"

Arwen took a brief moment before turning to Beca, her expression softening, getting neutral, erasing the cold aloofness from earlier. "Aunt Beca, I came to see you. But I suppose I should have called first."

Beca's gaze flicked between the two, her brows knitting in concern. "Did something happen?"

Arwen cast a fleeting glance at Ryan before shaking her head. "Nothing of importance. It just seems Ryan isn't too happy to see me, as always."

Beca looked at her son, about to say something, but Arwen interjected. "But anyway, I came for you, Aunt Beca. I have something to return to you," she said, extending the velvet box to her.

Beca frowned at it, confusion evident in her eyes, but before she could ask, Ryan growled lowly. "Arwen, I told you —" His words were abruptly cut off by the ringing of his phone.



Without checking the caller, he ignored the call. But the phone rang again with urgency, making him frown in frustration. "What is it?" he snapped as he answered the call.

But his expression immediately shifted as soon as the voice on the other end spoke. The irritation faded, replaced by something more serious. His brows furrowed with concern as he listened. "How did it happen?" he asked, his eyes flickering to his mother, a hint of accusation in his gaze. But he said nothing to her.

"Alright, I will be there soon," Ryan said before ending the call.

Arwen could sense something was wrong. The sudden change in his demeanor, the way his gaze pinned Beca with unspoken blame — something had shifted.

"I have to go," Ryan muttered, his voice tense but restrained.

Without further explanation, he turned on his heel and left the room, leaving Arwen and Beca behind in silence.

Arwen thought Beca would at least ask where



Ryan was hurrying off to, but with her standing there all so calmly, it felt like she already knew.

"Mr Jones, ask someone to prepare breakfast for Arwen," Beca instructed the butler, who had been standing behind her all this while.

Mr. Jones nodded and was about to carry out the instructions when Arwen politely declined.

"Aunt Beca, that won't be necessary. I have already had my breakfast," she paused, her eyes falling to the box in her hand. "I just came to see you and give this back to you," she added, motioning to look down at the box in her hand before opening it to reveal the ring inside.

"It's a ring that I gave to you, Arwen, you can keep it," Beca said without making any move to take it from her.

