

## 142 Don't make me hate you.

Arwen still remembered it. It was the most painful day of her life. She had cried, asking her mother not to take away one thing she held precious, but it was like no amount of her tears was enough to melt her mother's heart. She had decided to make her give up on her dream, and she didn't settle until she succeeded in that. 1

She was young, so she thought her mother was seeing the big picture for her. However, as she grew up, she realized that staying with Ryan was no good for her.

Catrin's lips curled into a sneer. "It doesn't matter what I had to do to make sure Delyth was out of the way. What matters is that you have failed to live up to your role, Arwen. You were supposed to secure your future with Ryan and become the future matriarch of the Foster family and you failed. Now you want to blame me? And what was so great about the stage? It was your other silly hobby that held nothing good."

Arwen's heart twisted painfully as her mother dismissed her passion as 'silly'. The stage has been her sanctuary –the one place she felt free, where she could lose and find herself all at once. It was the dream she had nurtured since childhood, the one thing that made her feel alive



and complete. She remembered the horse she had spent in the studio, dancing until her muscles burned, her soul soaring with each graceful movement. But her mother had reduced it to nothing more than a meaningless pastime. 2

"Mom, dancing was never a silly hobby," Arwen said, her voice barely above the whisper. "It was my dream. And you didn't take it for my own good. You took it because it didn't fit into your plans for me."

Catrin's expression remained unmoved. her cold gaze locked on Arwen. "Enough with the self-pity, Arwen. You are acting as if I ruined your life. I made sacrifices for you, made the right choices to secure your future –something you clearly don't value. But you are too blinded by this 'dream' nonsense to see it."

Self-pity! Really! Was that how her mother was now going to define it all? Arwen couldn't take it anymore. Clenching her hands into fists, she stood and looked her mother in the eye.

"Mom, just stop it. Don't make me ...hate you."

Catrin's face flushed with anger. "Say that again," she challenged. And Arwen didn't even hesitate in repeating herself.

"Mom, I said don't make me hate you. Your words right now are not humiliating me; they are

making you seem small in his eyes. So, please, stop. Stop before I can't stop myself from hating you." 1

"Arwen, I am your mother. How can you talk to me like that?" Catrin saw red. She hasn't expected Arwen to speak like that, not even in her dreadest dream. To her, Arwen was the daughter she shaped. How could she turn back and speak to her like that?

Arwen's gaze didn't falter as she looked at her mother, her resolve hardening with every word. "Same as you, Mom. I am also your daughter, yet you never hesitated. So, I guess over time I learnt it from you."

Idris was taken aback. He also hasn't expected Arwen to speak like that. He knew Catrin spoke a little too harshly and he was about to step in to stop her. But before he could, Arwen had taken the charge already. And for once he felt like she didn't need him to defend her. 4

So, he tried to ease the tension between the mother and daughter. "Arwen, I know your mother sounded a little harsh, but you should know better than anyone else that she loves you more than words can say. She just ... struggles to show it sometimes. She only wants the best for you. She loves you."

Arwen stared at her father, letting out a dry

chuckle. "When did love become so cruel, Dad? Since when did caging someone become a way to express affection?" she asked. Each question was not meant to seek the answer; rather, she put them out there to make her father realize that she could see things clearly.

Idris was at a loss for words. He didn't know what else to say. But Catrin was livid. Her expression darkened, and her fist clenched as she struggled to maintain her composure. "Everything I did was for you, Arwen," she snapped, her voice tight with frustration. "If I hadn't intervened, you would be wasting your life on that silly dream of dancing on the stage! I gave you a future with Ryan, a chance —"

"The same future I put an end to, Mom." Arwen interrupted sharply, her patience wearing thin. Watching her mother repeat the same arguments over and over and pushing her to the edge. "I broke up with him and put an end to it. It would be better if you accepted it sooner. Even if you don't, nothing will change, because I am no longer carrying the weight of your expectations." 1

"Arwen, you ..."

Before Catrin could say more, Arwen picked up her phone. After a few taps, she opened a file and held it out to her mother. "This is the last



piece of evidence I will show to prove how wrong of a choice Ryan is for me. But given your determination to marry me off to him, I doubt it will matter much to you." 3

Catrin frowned but took the phone. Idris stood up too to see as well, his expression hardening as he saw the image of Ryan lying with another woman, sharing a blanket that covered their naked bodies.

"What is this?" he demanded, his voice thundering with anger for the first time.

But Arwen's gaze remained fixed on her mother. She needed to see her reaction, desperately hoping for one. "Mom, won't you say anything?" she asked when even after a few moments, Catrin stood still.

