

## 146 Big disappointment.

"Catrin!" Idris froze, his expression shifting from disbelief to anger as Catrin's words echoed in the room. His fingers clenched into a fist as he tried to put some sense into his wife. "Have you lost your mind?" he asked, his voice rising, sharp and firm, in a way that was rare for him. He had never raised his voice at her before. "How can you even say such a thing? Are you threatening to disown her? How could you?" 1

"I am not threatening her, Idris. I am simply giving her a choice," Catrin said, her tone unwavering. She turned to Arwen, her gaze sharp and full of certainty. "Wasn't she complaining that I never gave her the chance to choose? Well, here it is now."

But Idris no longer shared her confidence. Shaking his head, he refused to give in. "This isn't a choice, but a threat, Catrin. You are being cruel. No parents threaten their child like that. You are letting your pride and need for control overshadow everything else — your love, your reason and even your humanity." His voice softened slightly, but the disappointment in his tone remained unmistakable. "If you are going to push her away like this, you are going to lose her completely. And that would be something you can never undo again."

He then turned to Arwen. His expression softened a little as he tried to salvage the moment. "Arwen, your mother didn't mean anything she said. She is just a little angry right now, but once she calms down, she will understand you. She always does."

But Catrin wouldn't relent. Rebuking her husband, she spoke, "Idris, I meant every word I said. I am angry, yes, but this anger won't subside until she does what I asked." She turned to Arwen, her tone colder than before. "Annul your marriage now, or don't ever think of calling us your parents —or yourself a Quinn." 1

Arwen's expression has gotten pale. She never imagined that the day would come when her mother would say such words. Her voice trembled as she asked, "Is ... is that really what you want, Mom?" 1

Catrin felt the sense of victory already. She knew this would be working well. After all, Arwen was her daughter. There is no way, she would bear to part with her. Too confident in herself, she nodded. "Yes, that's what I want." 1

Idris stared at his wife, his shoulders felt heavy with frustration and sorrow. "Catrin, stop this, please. Don't force her," he pleaded, his voice cracking with desperation. She might not have realized it now, but he knew well she would be regretting it the most later.

Turning back to Arwen, he tried to make amends. "Arwen, dear, don't listen to your mom. No matter what she says, know this: nothing will change. You are and will always be our daughter. You are a Quinn and always be a Quinn."

Despite his assurances, his words felt weak. Perhaps it was the years of silence that damaged his credibility. Arwen could no longer bring herself to believe them. A tear slipped from her eyes as she stared at her mother, nodding to her as, as if she were processing an internal decision.

That nod caught Catrin slightly off-guard, but she remained steadfast. Ignoring the unease in her gut, she demanded with surety. "So, Arwen, when will you begin the annulment process? Let me know and I will ask our lawyers to help you with it."

Arwen's fingers tightened around the strap of her bag, her knuckles turning white. She stared at her mother, the raw pain in her eyes slowly hardening into a resolve. "I won't be needing any help, Mom, because I am not undergoing any annulment process," she said, her voice quiet but unwavering. "You made it very clear where I stand with you. If the price of being a Quinn is giving up another passion I have started to hold dear, then maybe it's not worth paying."

Catrin was taken aback. The calmness that she had held all this while stirred and her confidence wavered. With her brows furrowed, she tried to process what Arwen actually meant.

Arwen paused, taking a shaky breath before continuing. Her gaze shifted between her parents. "I have spent my whole life to meet your expectations," she let a dry chuckle as if finding all of it a cruel joke, "...sacrificing my dreams, my happiness, my freedom, my everything —just to make you proud. And yet, here I am, being told I am a disgrace for finally choosing myself."

Her voice cracked, but she pressed on with her firm resolve. "You can keep the Quinn name if that's what matters most to you. I will leave it behind. If calling me your daughter seems like a disgrace to you, then fine after I walk out from here today, you won't have a daughter like me."

With that, she turned and walked towards the doors, her steps steady but confident. Catrin was so shocked that she couldn't even decide how to react. She stood there, watching as Arwen walked her way to the final door.

As she reached the door, Arwen paused. Her hands rested on the knob as she turned back to face them one last time. Her tears dried, replaced by a fiery determination that burned in her eyes.

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"I am done being someone you control, Mom. And I have long stopped hoping for something you would never give me, Dad." Her voice carried an authority that filled the room. "From this moment on, I will live my life for myself, without your approval, or expectations. Thank you for treating me with such love over the years."

Then she finally turned and left. Idris fell back, not able to take the loss anymore. With his face buried in his hands, he allowed the weight of the moment to crush him. His mind raced, replaying every word Arwen had said today. She was right —he had been a big disappointment as a father.

How was he not able to see it before? 2

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