

## 149 You are fired.

The entire room felt silent, the weight of his fury palpable as the team members exchanged nervous glances, each hoping not to be the one in his crosshairs. 1

No one dared to meet Ryan's gaze, their eyes cast down as they all tried to avoid Ryan's piercing gaze. Finally Kimberly, the Chief Communication Officer and PR head, stepped forward hesitantly. She adjusted her glasses, her hand trembled as she clutched the tablet with the official statement glaring on its screen.

"M-Mr. Foster, we were on our wit's end. I tried calling you to ask about it, but you didn't pick up any of my calls. So ..." Her voice wavered and a faint sheen of sweat formed on her brow as she tried to justify her attempt. But before she could finish, Ryan's icy voice cut through her explanation like a knife.

"So you decided to proceed without my explicit approval." He stepped closer threateningly, his gaze unrelenting. "Have you forgotten that the company follows a chain of command?"

Kimberly flinched but forced herself to stand her ground. "I-I never intend to. It was just that the situation was escalating and we couldn't ignore it further. The media was pressing and there was

growing concern among the investor and shareholders. I believed a swift action was necessary to control the narrative."

"Narrative?" Ryan's eyes narrowed. "Since when did my personal life become a narrative for all of you to manipulate?"

Kimberly swallowed hard, her face pale as beads of sweat formed on her brows. "That's ...That's not what I meant. I was just thinking about the company's reputation and ..."

"I will ask again, Kimberly," Ryan interrupted, his tone dark and foreboding. "On whose authority?" If you acted on your own without proper consultation, you will face the consequences."

At that moment, he felt like he had a reason to destroy the world. He never held his engagement with Arwen precious, but he never allowed anyone to question it as well. How dare today, his own employees try to prove it all false?

He couldn't explain how he felt when he read people online, refusing to believe Arwen and he had been engaged before. It pierced something deep in his heart. Something that he couldn't name properly now, but soon will be able to tell.

Kimberly's lips trembled, as she tried to steady herself. The suffocating tension was making it

even harder to breathe. "M-Mr. Foster, the statement was crafted by me alone. But before I decided on it, I did consult with —" she hesitated, her voice faltering.

Ryan's eyes darkened and the air in the room grew heavier. "Consulted with whom?" he demanded, dangerously low.

She gulped, forcing herself to meet his piercing gaze. "I —I consulted it with Mr. Evan." her voice barely audible. "He said it was right to issue a statement denying your engagement with Ms. Quinn and —" she couldn't bring herself to speak further. It already felt wrong to mention Daniel in it. But she had no choice. She could bear to lose the job at Foster Ventures.

For a moment, Ryan didn't react. His expression remained frozen as the words sank in. Then slowly, his jaws tightened and a storm unfurled in his eyes. Without a word, he turned on his heel and strode out of the room, his presence leaving a cold void behind.

The team remained frozen at their place, stunned into silence. And Kimberly wrung her hands nervously, already regretting everything all over again.

Ryan marched his way towards Daniel's cabin, his steps strong and simmering with fury. Reaching the door, he pushed the door

open with force, causing Daniel to look up in surprise.

"Ryan, what's wrong?" Daniel asked frowning already.

His lack of empathy was what stung Ryan deeply. Clenching his fists tight, he asked, "Did you give Kimberly the order to publish the statement?"

Daniel raised a brow but then nodded as if he was taking the honors. "Yes. She came to me yesterday, seeking help."

"Why?" Ryan demanded.

And Daniel furrowed his brows as if he couldn't understand. "Why, what?"

Ryan's jaws clenched as he gritted out, "Why did you ask her to deny the years-long relationship that I shared with Arwen."

Daniel broke into a chuckle. It was so spontaneous that he didn't even have the time to register it. When he saw Ryan's expression turning dark on it, he explained. "Sorry, I didn't mean to laugh, but I found it really humorous. I mean when did you share any kind of relationship with Arwen? For you, she was nothing more than air."

"Daniel!"

"I did what I felt was right for the company, Mr.

Foster," Daniel said, his behavior at once taking one eighty-degree turn. "While you were away, refusing to take Kimberly's call, I found no other way to save your and the company's reputation. After all, that was something important."

Ryan opened his mouth to speak something but just when he could have, Daniel interrupted him and added again. "Also, after your previous statement, where you have accepted your confession to Ms. Delyth Ember, this was the only way to save the day. We had no other choice. So, we did what was needed to be done."

Ryan's anger reached the boiling point as Daniel's dismissive attitude stroked the fire within him. He forgot their friendship in that instant and the only thing he remembered was that —it was Daniel who gave the idea to deny the engagement he had with Arwen.

The clench of his fingers grew tighter at his sides as he took his step closer, his towering frame leaning over Daniel's desk. Pressing the heels of his palms against the polished wood, his fingers dug in as though to anchor his explosive emotions.

"You had no right to make that call, Daniel Evan," Ryan said, his voice low and setting. "Especially when it concerned my personal life. You held no right."

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Daniel's eyes narrowed slightly, his expression sharp as he met Ryan's piercing gaze. "What do you want me to do then?" he asked, his tone carefully measured but carrying a hint of defiance.

Ryan stared at him, his eyes blazing with resolve. "Leave the company," he said coldly. "You are fired,"

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