

178 ...to make everything right.

Ryan frowned, not understanding what his mother meant by that. But Beca's expression remained firm and resolute, her confidence palpable. Bringing out her phone, she tapped it a few times before passing it to Ryan to check. 1

"Here," her voice came calm but cutting. "Take a look yourself. After this, tell me —do you still think you truly deserve Arwen?"

Ryan hesitated. He was both confused and terrified of what he might see. Recently, he had come to realize that, unknowingly, he had hurt Arwen in several ways. At the time, he had convinced himself that he was teasing her, punishing her for forcing him into a relationship he thought he didn't want. But now, in hindsight, he understood the truth —he hadn't been forced. He had stayed because, deep down, he had wanted to. He had just been too stubborn to admit it. 1

Swallowing hard, he finally took the phone and looked at the screen. And his heart dropped as his eyes locked onto the image. There he was, lying on the bed with Delyth wrapped in his arms. 1

His face turned pale, and he looked up at his mother, desperate to explain. "Mom, this isn't



what it looks."

But his attempts at justification faltered when Beca simply shrugged and said, "Does it matter?"

"Mom, ..."

"Ryan," she continued, her voice steady, "any woman who sees her fiancé lying with someone else wouldn't care whether it's what it looks like or not —especially when the other woman is none other than his first love." 1

Her words were so sure, so logical, that for a moment, even Ryan believed them. But then he shook his head, panic creeping into his voice, "Mom, what are you saying?"

Beca smiled, but there was no warmth in her smile. "Arwen received this picture the day you two were supposed to get your certificates. Right before you sent her the text about changing the date. How kind it must have been for her, right?"

Ryan's mind reeled as he pieced it together. He remembered Arwen's reply to his text —that was the first time she had mentioned breaking up. Was it because of this? Suddenly, everything started to fall into place.

But this ... his eyes dropped back to the image on the phone —this wasn't real.

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"Mom, this whole thing is a big misunderstanding, I can explain." Ryan's voice came desperate as he began to defend himself. "I just went out to have dinner with Delyth. It was just a dinner. I don't know how we ended up together in the hotel room later, but nothing happened between us, believe me. I have no memory of anything. If something had happened, I would have remembered. But —"

"Do you think that explains it all?" Beca asked, raising an incredulous brow. "If it does, then tell me — what was the need to go out for dinner with Delyth in the first place, especially when you were supposed to get officially married to Arwen the very next day? Do you even have an answer for that?"

"I..." Ryan opened his mouth, but no words came out. He wanted to explain but suddenly none of the explanations seemed to be valid.

Seeing her son unable to answer, Beca nodded in slight relief. "I am glad you still have some conscience left in you," Beca said, but her words only made Ryan's chest tighten further.

"Ryan," she continued, her voice unwavering, "have you ever thought how this image reached Arwen? If nothing happened, then why would Delyth allow such a picture to exist? And more importantly, why would it find its way to Arwen right before your wedding?"

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Ryan frowned, not able to process what his mother was saying. "Mom, do you mean ...Delyth —"

"Yes," Beca interrupted sharply. "It was Delyth who sent the picture to Arwen. Now, I don't have to explain what intentions she might have behind it, do I?"

Ryan's expression changed. It shifted from disbelief to anger. His jaws tightened and his fists clenched. "Why would she do that?" he whispered, his voice trembling with a mixture of hurt and rage.

"Why would she not do it, Ryan?" Beca's tone softened a little but it remained firm. "She wants you with her which needed Arwen to be removed from your life. Of course, she would do everything and anything to make it happen. Bringing you out for dinner and then sending this picture to Arwen was her plan. And you comfortably handed her all that she needed."

Ryan felt his chest heavy with guilt, He looked back at the image, and shame got evident in his eyes. "I didn't mean for any of this to happen. I was just looking out Delyth. I never ..." he murmured, his voice slowly trailing off. 3

Beca gave him a moment, he needed uninterrupted. After that, she stood up and said, "Intentions no longer matter, son. Consequences

do. So, now accept the consequences that you have brought on yourself. You lost Arwen, and also the right to seek a second chance from her." She then pressed a hand on his shoulder and added more firmly. "It's better you accept it now and let her go. Move on." 3

Ryan's fingers tightened and he looked up at his mother, shaking his head in refusal. "No, Mom. I can't do that," he began, "Not because I can't let go of her. But because it wouldn't be right for her. I already have so many wrongs with her. I can't bear to add another one to the list."

"Ryan!" Beca frowned because she could see her son was still finding it hard to accept.

Ryan stood up and said firmly, "Arwen has misunderstood the things between me and Delyth, Mom. I should explain to her and make her understand that it isn't what she thinks." His tone suddenly became confident.


With things making more sense, he could see a chance to redeem himself. As long as he explained things to Arwen, he was sure he could bring her back to himself. And this time, he would cherish her the way she should have been cherished.

When he saw his mother frowning, he added, "I know you think I lost Arwen, but I believe I still deserve a second chance to make everything



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right. I can't just accept the consequences that aren't right —neither for me nor for Arwen." 



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