



185 Wouldn't let it slide.

"Zeke!" Ryan dropped to his knees and almost screamed the same as he had done at that time. Even after eight long years and countless desperate efforts to suppress it, the memory still clung to him like a shadow. The day Zeke fell —it played so vividly as if it had just happened the other day. **1**

"It's my fault," he whispered, his voice breaking. His chest heaved as the memory consumed him again. His hands trembled, still feeling the ghostly sensation of Zeke's hand slipping from his grasp.

The guilt he had buried for years came rushing back, raw and unreadable. The present faded away, and he was no longer here; his mind had taken him back to the edge of the cliff. **2**

He couldn't feel the energy of the current world around him until he felt an arm drape feebly around his shoulders. The touch was startling, and for a fleeting moment, the hope of seeing Zeke again bloomed in his heart.

"Zeke!" he called out, his voice filled with desperation and longing as he turned to the side.

But the shine in his gaze dulled instantly when

he saw Delyth's face instead. Her brows were knitted in concern. She was speaking something but for a good while, he couldn't process her words. In his ears, only the haunting silence of Cicus Valley was swishing.

"I didn't kill him," Ryan murmured, his voice distant and pleading. "Don't blame me for Zeke's death. I-I didn't kill him."

It wasn't until Delyth cupped his face gently with her warm hands did he snapped back to reality.

"Don't blame me for Zeke's death, I-I didn't kill him," he said and it was only when Delyth cupped his face, he came back to reality.

"Ryan, I am sorry," she whispered, her voice trembling as if she was trying hard to hold back her own pain. "I shouldn't have brought that back." 1

Ryan blinked, still waiting for her to say that he wasn't the one who pushed Zeke off that cliff. That he wasn't the one to bring that cruel fate to him.

And Delyth knew well what he wanted for her, yet she took her time to make him realize well what he seemed to be forgetting. 1

Keeping her expression empathetic, she spoke again in a quivering voice as though struggling with guilt herself. "I shouldn't have mentioned



Zeke's death. Not when I knew what it made you feel like. I am sorry. I was justI was just too lost in my own pain that I didn't realize yours."

"I didn't kill him," he said again, his voice more insistent than before.

Delyth nodded slowly, her face etched with sorrow. "I know," she said in a soothing tone. "It was purely an accident. How could you deliberately push him? You couldn't. I don't blame you for it, Ryan. I never did and neither would Zeke."

She paused, her voice breaking slightly as she continued, "It's just that I felt so lonely today, accused by you that I couldn't hold myself back from saying something I shouldn't have."

Her voice faltered and she winced, drawing Ryan's attention to her almost instantly. His eyes darted to the floor, noticing something he hadn't seen before —a small shard of glass had pierced Delyth's wrist as she sat on the floor supporting herself. 1

"What are you doing here?" he asked, pure concern laced in his voice. His gaze swept over the floor, where the shards of glass gleamed faintly. "Careful! There are shards of glass on the floor. Why are you sitting here?" 1

Delyth smiled weakly, her expression seemed



soft and sympathetic masking the victorious in her eyes. "You weren't careful too, Ryan. Thankfully, you haven't hurt yourself. If you had ... I would have been able to forgive myself."

Ryan exhaled deeply, his hands trembling as he carefully removed the shard from her wrist. "You should have been more careful. There was no need for you to look after me," he said before distancing himself from her. "I have promised Zeke to look after you. If you get hurt like this, it will fail me." 1

He said before bending down to pick her up in his arms. Delyth tried to snuggle in his arms, but Ryan kept his contact deliberately small. Bringing her back to the bed, he quickly stepped back before shifting his gaze to her legs. "Did you hurt your legs?" he asked. 1

Delyth clenched her fingers, not liking the subtle indifference in Ryan's attitude. But keep her smile, she shook her head. "I can't even feel their existence, how can I feel the pain."

"They will get better, Delyth," Ryan said, his brows knitting with something Delyth couldn't recognize. Like somewhere her efforts to guilt-trap him have not been enough.

But how could that be possible? After all, Zeke's name had always been her trump card. It had always kept him tethered to her, bound with

guilt and regret. 1

Delyth stared at Ryan, studying his face, trying to decipher why her trump card felt weaker this time.

"I have reached out to specialists who can help with your condition," Ryan added further. His tone was steady, but his words pierced through Delyth's thoughts. "I am waiting for their responses. Once we hear back, we will make arrangements for your treatment."

Delyth smiled weakly and nodded. "I can do nothing but depend on you for this, Ryan. Thank you."

Ryan stared at her for a moment before slowly saying, as though contemplating something deeply. "I am sorry for what happened today, Delyth. But don't worry—I will get to the root of this. If that image reached Arwen, that means someone did send it to her. Sooner or later, I will find" 1

As he said that, his eyes carefully studied Delyth's expression, as if confirming something.

Delyth froze at his words. She thought she had handled it well. But ... that didn't seem the case now. 1

Masking the crack in her composure, she nodded, "Yes, Ryan. We shouldn't let this slide.



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Someone deliberately tried to make Arwen misunderstand you —and she did misunderstand. Do you think if I explain to her, it will help?" 1



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