



197 Old man, thrice the age of father?

"Arwen, what do you mean? And how are you talking? Did you forget I am your mother?"

Catrin's frown deepened at Arwen's words.

Something about her felt different today. The Arwen she knew wasn't like this. She might have acted confident everywhere else, but in front of her, her mother, she was always hesitant, always seeking approval. 1

But the woman sitting before her now bore none of that meekness. Instead, she exuded an air of aloofness and distance that was almost chilling.

"Mother?" Arwen's lips curled up in a mocking smile as she shook her head. "I think it's something that you are forgetting here, Mrs. Quinn. We severed all the ties last time when I came to this place of yours. You said you regretted having a daughter like me and I agreed to step out of your life for good."

Catrin's eyes narrowed, her expression hardening. "You think it's easy to break relations like that, Arwen?"

"Well," Arwen shrugged in nonchalance. "I thought it would be difficult, but it didn't turn out to be so impossible after all. In fact, it feels



quite liberating. I feel now longer under someone's cage —someone's control anymore."

"Arwen!" Catrin's fury flared. She never knew Arwen was so capable of getting on her nerves until today. "Mind your tone. I birthed you, you can't talk to me like this! And why are you even here today? Didn't you say that you would never come back home —ever? Regretting already?"

Arwen paused, fixing her gaze on her mother. Just when Catrin thought her words had finally silenced her, she saw her daughter's lips curl again into a disdainful smirk.

"What are you smiling at? Do you know how disrespectful that is?" Catrin snapped.

But her flare of anger didn't faze Arwen. Instead, she met her gaze evenly and replied, "Aren't you too full of yourself, Mrs. Quinn? I mean, how can you even think I came back because I regretted the only right decision I ever made in my life?"

"Arwen!"

"Mrs. Quinn, for your clarification, let me tell you," Arwen said sharply, her voice cutting through the tense air like a blade. "I no longer consider this place as mine. If I haven't made this clear the last time, I am doing it now. Kindly remember it from hereon. And for what I am doing here today. Well, I have come to represent



my husband here. Didn't you cordially invite him over the call earlier."

Catrin's face hardened. "If I called him, he would have come. Why did he even send you?"

"He didn't send me," Arwen replied without any hesitation. "Since I accepted your invitation on his stance, I felt it was only right if I visit you here today. So when I came here to your *place*, I came here not as the daughter you lost, but as his wife, his mRs. Winslow. I hope I made it very clear to you now."

Catrin's thoughts spiralled, her brows furrowing in disbelief. Meanwhile, Arwen recalled the call when she had let Mr. Carl think he was speaking to Aiden, though it had been a member of Winslow house staff.

No longer able to hold her temper anymore, Catrin slammed her hand on the table and stood up in a rage, "Arwen, are you protecting him? Do you think you can do so against me?"

Arwen raised her brows as she slowly stood up to match her height —not because she felt intimidated sitting there, but just because she wanted to emphasize her dominance. After all, she was a few inches taller than her mother, and she wanted to see if height could rattle her as easily as words.



"He doesn't need my protection mother. The man I chose is perfectly capable of protecting himself —and me," Arwen said, her eyes gleaming with confidence. "But if there comes a day when I have to protect him, I would do so all readily, regardless of who stands against me."

"Arwen —"

"I have warned you before about this, Mrs. Quinn. Don't dare cross your line with him," Arwen's tone turned frigid, her gaze icy as she stared Catrin down, freezing her in place. "He is my husband —my bottom line. I might have tolerated your interference before, but things have changed. I have changed. I won't allow you or anyone to come at him. It took me long enough, but I have realized something —I have a protective instinct inside me —for him, especially. I won't let you or anyone treat him with anything less than what he actually deserves." 3

Catrin has taken aback. She had known Arwen had drifted away, but she hadn't realized the extent of her transformation.

"Arwen ..." Catrin's voice faltered. For the first time, she felt lacking words. It was kind of humiliating.

"I humoured his small trick of yours because I wanted to see you again and let you understand



things personally," Arwen's voice softened a little, but it still held the same sharp edge of indifference. "But the next time it wouldn't be the same. I won't be kind enough to come here and give you a warning."

"Are you threatening me, Arwen?" Catrin gritted her teeth.

But it only made Arwen pull her lips in a smile. "If that can make you stay away from my life, then yes, I am threatening you, Mrs. Quinn. Respect the boundaries and the choices you have drawn yourself."

With that, she took a step back, picked up her purse and strode back in the direction through which she had come earlier.

But she must have just merely taken a few steps, when Catrin's voice rang in the air, pausing her halfway.

"Arwen, you sound so confident of him. Do you think I don't know who he is?" Catrin stood rooted at her spot for a moment, but while speaking that, she slowly turned to Arwen. "You married some old man who is thrice the age of your father and you come to argue here with me as if you married the royal prince. Do you think you even hold a position to argue with me over him?"

< 197 Old man, thrice the age of father?

Arwen's brows drew in confusion and she turned back to look at Catrin. "What did you say? Old man thrice he age of father?"



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