

199 My husband dotes on me.

Although those words stung Arwen's tongue, she still let it roll off because that was the only way she could preserve her resolve. After she had left this place for good, she couldn't let anything hold her back anymore. 1

"Arwen, how are you speaking to your Dad?" Catrin's voice cut through the air as she walked closer, closing the distance between them. She hadn't expected Idris to return early, but suddenly his presence felt like a blessing. At least with him here, she could ask him to stop Arwen. "Do you know how much your father has been blaming himself since the day you left us? He is punishing himself every day, thinking he wasn't a good father to you." 2

Arwen's fingers clenched at that. She knew her father would be doing that, and the daughter in her was aching to wipe away all the guilt he carried. But doing so would only tether her again to the chains she had worked so hard to break—the chains of the compelled emotions she carried for her parents.

No, she couldn't allow herself to fall back into that trap again.

Arwen's gaze hardened again. Turning back to Catrin, she said coldly, "People have to carry the

baggage of their own guilt and regret. Neither you nor anyone else can help him share it." She then shifted to look back at her father and continued. "If Mr. Quinn is feeling guilty, it means he has finally realized his mistakes. That's a good thing —because now, at least, he might see the truth for what it is."

Catrin's face flushed in anger, her blood boiling at Arwen's audacity. "You —"

"Arwen, you are right," Idris spoke, interrupting Catrin unknowingly. His voice was calm but laced with remorse. "Dad has been wrong, all along. I wasn't the father you deserved. I wasn't there to protect you and your dreams. And all that realization now has become a guilt. But ... can you please find in your heart to give your dad a chance —a chance to make things right? To become the father you have always deserved?"

Arwen's nail dug into her palm as she fought to maintain her composure. The vulnerability in her father's voice was like a blade against her resolve. She wanted to believe him, wanted to reach out and let herself forgive —but forgiveness didn't erase the scars of abandonment.

"Mr. Quinn," she said, her voice sharp but steady, "people don't get second chances just because they feel regret. Everything comes with a cost."



You might have realized your mistakes now, but it came at the cost of losing me forever." 2

Her words hung in the air, her indifference becoming more and more tangible. Not just in her tone but also in her attitude.

But even so, Idris couldn't complain, after all, he was responsible for pushing his daughter away. Otherwise, Arwen has always been a loving daughter. His shoulders slumped and his face was etched with despair. "Arwen..." he whispered. "I know I can't change the past, but I thought since you are back, I might have a chance in —"

"If you thought I am back, then that's where you thought it wrong, Mr. Quinn," Arwen interrupted to say. "I am not back." She paused, turning to look at Catrin to add further. "I came here to warn Mrs. Quinn for the last time. Though I am not sure how well she has gotten my warning, this was something I wanted to do so that in future I don't have to carry the baggage of regret that I didn't give a chance to her."

Catrin was caught off guard. She feared this but she thought she would be able to control Arwen anything recklessly in front of Idris. But she never thought Arwen would not even give her a chance to stop her.

"Warning?" Idris didn't understand. With his



brows furrowed in confusion, he turned to Catrin and asked, "What is Arwen talking about, Catrin?"

Catrin's expression changed. She never intended for Idris to know that she has no plans for understanding Arwen's side of the story. "Idris, she is just rebelling. I don't know how to control her anymore."

"You don't have to control her, Catrin," Idris snapped. He started feeling like Catrin had only made the situation get worse. "I thought we already discussed about that, didn't we?"

Arwen felt her patience getting over. So not holding any plans to stay there any longer, she pulled her hand up to check her watch, interrupting, "I think that was it for me." She said drawing all the attention required." Then glancing up at the two she said, "I have already done my part here and now I can leave." 1

Her lips curled up in a polite smile but the way it had lightly curled up on the corners, one could already tell it was just for a formality. "Mrs. Quinn, the next time when you try to reach my husband, it would be better if you invite him cordially as a guest instead of a drive and pick-up service. Though he dotes on me, I still wouldn't like him to visit a place where he isn't respected."

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Arwen finally obeyed. But little did Catrin know that wasn't the real case.



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