



216 Stuck for forever!

Ryan had almost dialled the number when Delyth's scoffed, her confidence unshaken. "Ryan, you won't do anything to me," she said, her eyes no longer staring at him, but cast downward. 1

If Ryan hadn't heard her words, seeing her like that he might have thought she felt guilty of her actions. But just now, neither her words nor her tone carried the remorse.

Holding the phone midair, he glanced at her, asking, "Are you challenging me?" His voice came low but sharp.

Delyth didn't look up immediately. But slowly, she lifted her gaze at him, her eyes betrayed no regrets. "If you want to take it as a challenge, go ahead," she replied. "I don't mind. But you won't be able to do anything to me even if you are dying to do it."

Ryan's lips curled up into a bitter smirk. "Then let me show you if I can or cannot."

With that, he pressed the button, hearing it ring soon.

But just as the call was connected and he was



about to speak, Delyth interrupted. Her voice was calm but cutting, devoid of any fear. "Ryan, do you think Zeke would forgive you for this? He gave you my responsibility —to keep me safe, to help me build a life where I could live in peace. Do you think with what you are planning to do to me, you will be able to fulfil that promise? Or are you now trying to break the promise you have given to my dying brother?" 1

Ryan froze. His knuckles turned white as his grip on the phone tightened.

"Mr. Foster!" The officer's voice came through the line, crisp and professional.

Ryan heard it but couldn't bring himself to respond longer. The promise he had made to Zeke loomed over him like a heavy weight. 2

"Mr. Foster? Are you there?"

Delyth's eyes gleamed with triumph when she saw the hesitation in him. But she remained silent, letting Ryan dwell on it on his own. Even if he seemed hesitant now, she knew what would be coming out as the end result. She had known it always.

The brief moment felt like a decade. Ryan clenched his jaw, his frustration bubbling beneath the surface. He ended the call without



saying a word. The room fell silent but he could hear the sound of his uneven breathing, his suffocation with the situation was almost palpable. 3

Delyth smirked. "You see, Ryan," she said, her voice now a whisper as she leaned a little back to look better at his face. "You won't be able to bring yourself to punish me. No matter what. Not as long as you remember my brother and the loss you have caused in our lives."

Ryan glanced at her, his gaze no longer carrying the light it once carried for her. "Why, Delyth?" he asked finally, his voice strained. "Why did you have to become this person? Zeke wouldn't have wanted this for you."

Delyth's smirk faltered for a moment, replaced with something that almost resembled pain. But it disappeared soon as if it never appeared there. "What did I become, Ryan? I became nothing. I just remained how I have been — always. I have loved you and I still love you. I didn't change. It's you who changed" She scoffed softly as if mocking him. "You said you didn't love her, but now you claim to only love her. How can you love her, Ryan? Shouldn't you love me?"

"I can't love you, Delyth," Ryan said, his voice



like ice. "Do you hear me? I can't love you. And stop trapping me with Zeke's promise. Because more than I know, you know it that even Zeke would have tolerated you seeing like this. He would have allowed you to harm Arwen if he had been here, alive in between us."

"But he is not alive, Ryan!" Delyth snapped, her voice breaking into hysterics. "He is not here with us! And since he is not, don't bring him into this. It's just you and me now. I don't care what he would have wanted. As long as you stay with me, I don't care about anything else. I just want you. And since you have promised Zeke to take my responsibility you can't unburden yourself until you fulfill it."

She then looked down at herself and added, "Given the condition I have turned into, sorry, but you have to keep me with you forever, Ryan. Do you hear me, Ryan? Forever. We are going to stay together, forever."

Ryan's fingers balled into a fist on his side. He never felt this trapped in his life. Zeke's promise felt like a noose around his neck, tightening with every passing second. But deep down, he knew Zeke would never have wanted this for him.

"Delyth," he began, "your brother gave me your



responsibility but he never said that we have to stay together our entire life for it. As long as I make you that you live a comfortable life, I don't require to stay with you forever. He wanted me to make you independent enough. And for that, I don't have to keep you around always. I —" 1

"What do you mean?" Delyth cut him off, her voice rising in rage. "Are you saying you will abandon me like this, Ryan? In this condition? Don't be a coward, twisting Zeke's words to suit yourself. You are disrespecting my brother by doing that and I won't let you!"

Ryan no longer let her words affect her. Exhaling sharply, he said, "I no longer need your approval for anything, Delyth. It's a promise between me and Zeke and I will do as I deem fit. You don't have to tell me anything, anymore."

"Ryan!" Delyth's eyes widened, panic flashing across her face. "You can't be this cruel. You can't be planning ways to abandon me like that. I love you, Ryan. Are you even hearing me? I love you."

Ryan turned his back to her and spoke, his voice coming frigid. "I have arranged the doctors for you. The best you can get. Your



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surgery will be scheduled this week. Once it turns out to be successful, you will be able to stand again on your feet. For the rest, we will see about it later."



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