

Chapter 109

The sun had barely risen when Ryan Walker stood in front of his bedroom mirror, adjusting the cuffs of his white shirt.

Today wasn't just any ordinary day. It was the day Elizabeth McCarthy would meet the real CEO of Nova Technologies. It was the day her pride would crumble and the day her illusion of control would shatter completely.

Ryan stared at himself in the mirror for a long moment before speaking under his breath. "This is the day she finds out exactly who I am."

As he reached for his coat and prepared to slip his arms into it, the sound of footsteps approaching from the hallway made him pause. He turned around quickly, alert, only to relax when he saw who entered the room.

"Claudia?" he said, surprised, as a small smile tugged at the corner of his lips. "Well, this is a pleasant surprise."

Claudia stood in the doorway, her suitcase wheeled in behind her. "I landed late last night," she said as she stepped forward. "Didn't want to wake you. I figured you'd need your rest before the big show."

Ryan chuckled and turned fully to face her. "You're back early. I thought you'd be gone for a couple more days."

"I wrapped up the meetings ahead of schedule," she replied as she walked toward him. "Besides, I couldn't miss this for the world." She picked up the suit jacket he had left on the bed and held it open for him. "Come on, let me help you."

Ryan turned around and slipped his arms into the sleeves. Claudia adjusted the collar gently, smoothing the fabric over his shoulders before



brushing an imaginary dust from his chest. Her eyes sparkled mischievously. "So, did you get the email from Elizabeth McCarthy?"

Ryan met her gaze and smiled knowingly. "Oh, I got it, long and dramatic as ever. She really poured her heart into it."

Claudia smirked. "She begged the CEO of Nova for a meeting, completely unaware she was begging you."

Ryan adjusted his tie in the mirror. "I approved the request. She'll be there by this evening."

Claudia bent her head. "So this is it, huh? The moment of truth, the time she finally sees what she lost."

Ryan's smirk broadened. "She won't see it coming."

Claudia rested her hands on his shoulders for a moment. "Don't go too hard on her."

Ryan gave her a sidelong glance. "You're feeling sorry for her?"

"No," Claudia said quickly, her lips twitching. "But you've already taken everything. Just... don't let her walk away completely broken."

Ryan paused for a moment, then shrugged lightly. "She's already broken, she just hasn't realized it yet."

Claudia walked toward the closet, pulling out her own coat. "Well then, how about you stall a bit and wait for me? We could go together."

Ryan raised an eyebrow. "You want to come?"

"Of course I want to come. I've been gone for a week and haven't seen Nova HQ in days. Besides," she added with a teasing grin, "watching



Elizabeth's jaw drop today would be the best entertainment."

Ryan chuckled again and loosened his tie slightly. "Alright! Fifteen minutes but you're buying breakfast."

"Deal."

Meanwhile, in the McCarthy mansion, Elizabeth McCarthy descended the staircase dressed in a fitted black blazer over a white blouse, paired with a pencil skirt and elegant heels.

She clutched a leather portfolio in one hand and her phone in the other.

As she reached the bottom step, her parents, who were already dressed and waiting in the living room, looked up at her.

Mr. McCarthy was dressed in a three-piece gray suit, and beside him, Mrs. McCarthy, sat with her legs crossed, also waiting for Elizabeth to come down.

"Ah, good," her father said as he stood. "We'll leave in ten minutes, the driver's ready."

Elizabeth blinked. "Wait, We?"

Her father frowned. "Yes... You, me and your mother, we're presenting the proposal together, aren't we?"

Elizabeth shifted uncomfortably. "Actually... no. I'll be going with Julian."

Mr. McCarthy's face hardened. "Excuse me?"



"I want to handle this on my own," Elizabeth said. "Last time... last time you were present, we lost everything. Ryan took McCarthy Technologies from us right under our noses. I think it's time I tried a different approach."

Her mother straightened. "Elizabeth, this is a business meeting, not a social experiment."

"I know," Elizabeth replied. "And that's why I'm going with Julian. He used to work at Nova and he knows the people there. He can help."

Mr. McCarthy laughed loudly. "Julian? The man who got fired from Nova?"

Elizabeth winced slightly but didn't back down.

Julian, who had just entered the room, quickly stepped forward, clutching his laptop bag. "That was a misunderstanding, sir," he said defensively. "Someone sabotaged me from the inside. But I still have friends there, people who respect me."

Mr. McCarthy turned his gaze on him, unimpressed. "Friends who respect you... but didn't stop you from being fired by the management?"

Julian's face turned red, and he lowered his eyes.

Elizabeth stepped in. "Dad, please. This isn't about Julian's past, it's about our future. He can still help."

Mr. McCarthy's voice rose. "He doesn't know anything about business, Elizabeth. He was a glorified assistant! He couldn't even manage that properly and you want to entrust him with our company's last hope? With our family legacy?"

"I believe in him," she said simply. "And I believe this proposal is strong



enough to convince Nova's CEO to help us rebuild."

Mr. McCarthy said in a low voice. "Elizabeth, this is our only chance. The CEO of Nova is nearly impossible to reach. If you go there and mess this up—"

"Let her go," Mrs. McCarthy cut in softly.

Mr. McCarthy turned, shocked. "what are you—"

"I said let her go," she repeated, standing slowly. "If this is her way of fixing things, then we should let her try. We did it our way... and it failed."

Mr. McCarthy clenched his jaw, but didn't argue further.

Elizabeth crossed the room and kissed her mother's cheek gently. "I'll make you proud, Mom. I'll get this deal, I promise."

Her mother nodded. "We'll be waiting."

Elizabeth glanced at her father but he didn't say a word.

They walked towards the door and Julian held the door open for Elizabeth and she stepped out.

As she stepped into the car, her thoughts wandered back to Ryan, back to the humiliation in the boardroom, and the look on his face when he seized everything.

Today's different, she told herself.

"After I rebuild my father's old company, with the help of the CEO of Nova, I would make it rise above McCarthy Technologies and bring you down with it."