

Chapter 111

Ryan and Claudia made their way through the corridor side by side. Claudia's hand was looped casually through Ryan's arm as they walked.

She looked ahead toward the large, frosted glass door at the far end of the corridor, the one marked in clean, bold letters "Chief Executive Officer."

As they neared the door, she tilted her head slightly toward Ryan and asked softly, "Are we going in now? Or do you want to wait a bit before dealing with them?"

Ryan raised his brow and reached for the handle. "Let's just get it over with," he murmured.

He reached for the handle and pushed the door open.

But immediately they stepped inside, they both stopped suddenly. Ryan blinked in surprise and took a step back, his face wrinkling in distaste from the warm air that hit him.

The office felt like a sauna, and it felt stuffy and suffocating. Ryan looked around and saw that the AC wasn't working and the ceiling fan spun slowly, barely moving the heat. 1

Ryan frowned, stepping further inside and glancing around. "Why is it so hot in here?"

Claudia stood beside him, eyeing the digital thermostat that blinked red. "I think the power is out on this block," she said, pulling her phone from her pocket. "That explains the dead AC. Let me find out what's going on."

Ryan unbuttoned the top of his shirt, already regretting stepping inside. He turned to her. "Any idea when it'll be fixed?"



Claudia shrugged lightly. "Let's ask."

She tapped quickly on her screen and dialed the number of the building's electrician. A few rings later, a voice came through from the other end.

"Hello, Nova Engineering Department," came the rushed apologetic male voice.

"Hi, it's Claudia Duval. Can you tell me what's happening with the power on the executive block?"

"Oh...yes, ma'am, we're working on it now. A fuse blew during a system update. It'll take about thirty minutes to have everything back up and running properly. I really apologize for the inconvenience caused."

Claudia sighed and glanced at Ryan. "Thirty minutes," she repeated for him.

Ryan nodded. "Alright, thanks. Just try to be fast," she said into the phone before hanging up.

Ryan took another step into the hot room, then turned around quickly. "I'm not sitting in here sweating like a pig," he muttered with a smile, walking back toward the door. "I'll wait outside, at least the corridor gets some breeze."

Claudia followed him out without question. Just beside the office door, two long wooden benches lined the walls. One was directly beside the door, and one was across from it. Ryan chose the bench opposite the door and sat down, stretching his legs slightly.

Claudia took a seat beside him and crossed her legs, pulling out her tablet.

They didn't sit for more than three minutes before voices echoed from the stair.



"Of course," Ryan muttered dryly, not even needing to look. He knew exactly who it was.

Elizabeth came striding down the corridor while Julian followed behind, holding a leather folder and constantly adjusting his tie.

The moment Elizabeth caught sight of Ryan, her whole face twisted in irritation.

She groaned and slapped her own forehead, clearly agitated. "What kind of miserable luck is this?" she mumbled, her voice was loud enough for everyone in the hallway to hear. "Why is it always him?"

Julian tried to keep pace with her, whispering something, but Elizabeth was already storming forward, headed directly toward Ryan. She looked so irritated seeing Ryan again.

But before she could get too close, Claudia stood up and stopped her from coming any closer.

"Back off, Elizabeth," Claudia said firmly in a low voice. "You're no longer his wife. You don't get to charge at him like this, not anymore. Respect his space."

Elizabeth halted, clearly caught off guard by Claudia's sudden intervention. "Excuse me? Who do you think you are to tell me what to do?"

Claudia didn't even react to it the way she thought, she spoke calmly. "I said you need to keep your distance. You made your decision, Elizabeth, you walked away. You don't get to keep showing up and acting like you own his attention because you don't."

Elizabeth's laughed loudly as if Claudia had just told the biggest joke



ever. "Oh please. Spare me the lecture, Claudia. You might have managed to sleep your way into Nova, but don't think for a second that gives you the right to preach to me."

Claudia's eyes narrowed, but her voice remained steady. "You might want to start showing a little humility. Ryan's been nothing but composed around you, and yet you keep poking. You might want to consider apologizing to him, not attacking him."

Elizabeth crossed her arms. "Apologize? To him? For what, being a disappointment? I should be the one asking him if he's finally managed to grow a spine since I left."

Ryan watched silently. His eyes moved between Claudia and Elizabeth, and though his expression remained composed, he could sense Claudia was getting more irritated.

"I mean, really," Elizabeth added, now shifting her attention fully to Ryan. "He's still the same weakling I left behind. You're sitting here like a forgotten file on someone's desk. And you want me to apologize? You people are delusional."

At that moment, Claudia's body tensed and her lips parted, about to respond but Ryan was faster.

He reached over and gently tapped her hand.

Claudia immediately understood why Ryan had tapped her.

Claudia inhaled slowly and clamped her mouth shut. She glanced at Ryan and gave a tight nod, stepping back and folding her arms instead.

Elizabeth didn't notice the communication between them.

She was too busy tossing her hair and turning toward Julian. "Let's just



sit and wait for the CEO. We'll be going in first, obviously. No point letting losers like this get ahead of us."

"As soon as the CEO of Nova comes, we would go in and meet him, and only if we are done would they enter," Elizabeth said coldly.

Ryan said nothing.

He simply leaned back against the wall, his arms folded over his chest, and his eyes moved toward the closed office door as a small smile played at the corner of his lips.

Thirty more minutes.

Then the truth would speak for itself.