

Chapter 114

Her voice was filled with impatience, "what do you mean... by that?"

Her chin moved upward, and there was a mockery in her tone as she kept speaking.

"Because from where I'm standing, Mr. Wentworth, it sounds suspiciously like you're defending him." She jabbed her thumb over her shoulder in Ryan's direction without even looking at him.

"And if you are, then—"

She didn't get the chance to finish.

Mr. Wentworth's patience, which had been dangling by a single worn thread all morning, finally snapped.

His expression hardened, and without a word, he stepped forward and took hold of her arm firmly, but not rough enough to hurt.

Elizabeth gasped at the contact, her eyes widening. "Excuse me? What do you think—?"

He didn't answer. Instead, he turned and instantly dragged her into the office.

She stumbled into the office threshold. "What the hell do you think you're doing?" she hissed, jerking her arm back the moment they were fully inside. "You can't just pull people around like that. I..."

But she stopped speaking when she noticed something that irritated her.

Mr. Wentworth stepped aside, motioning toward the large, glass desk that dominated the center of the office.



There, behind it, sat Ryan.

His fingers rested lightly on the armrests of the Executive Chair.

There was an ease in the way he sat there, the kind of ease that didn't need to be explained.

It clearly showed Ryan owned the place.

Elizabeth's stomach tightened inexplicably after seeing this, but she shoved the feeling away.

Mr. Wentworth's voice was low as he spoke. "Elizabeth... are you really that daft? That blind?"

She blinked at him, caught off guard by the bluntness. "Excuse me?"

He took a step closer, lowering his voice but making each word heavier than the last. "For someone to swipe an access card and open this door... for someone to walk into this office and sit in that chair — the Executive Chair — without anyone stopping him... what, exactly, do you think that means?"

Elizabeth's lips curved into a mocking smile and for a brief moment she even laughed.

"It means, Mr. Wentworth, that you're not nearly as sensible as I thought you were," she said coldly.

Her arm swept toward Ryan in an accusatory gesture. "Isn't it obvious? Ryan and Claudia must have stolen the CEO's access card! How are you not seeing that?"

Mr. Wentworth's eyes narrowed, his patience breaking down further. "You truly have no idea, do you?"



Elizabeth folded her arms, bending her head slightly, and then she raised it again...

"The only thing I have an idea about," she said slowly, "is that this man ..." she jabbed her finger toward Ryan again "this man has absolutely no business in this office. And yet here you are, defending him instead of doing your job."

Through it all, Ryan didn't speak. He sat there, relaxed but watching her rant.

His silence seemed almost calculated, like he was letting her dig herself deeper.

Mr. Wentworth opened his mouth, ready to finally tear down her delusion but the steady, heavy sound of approaching footsteps in the hallway made him pause.

The door opened, a tall man in a perfectly a black suit walked in.

His presence was immediately commanding and intimidating. He was a face anyone in the business world could recognize.

He was the second-in-command at Nova Inc., the man whose interviews and public appearances made him the visible face of the company while the CEO remained more elusive.

Julian's eyes lit up instantly. He smoothed his suit jacket with a quick swipe of his hands, straightened his shoulders, and stepped forward with what he clearly believed to be his most charming smile.

"Thank God you're here, Sir," Julian began, his tone filled with relief. "We've been dealing with quite a situation. This man," he turned, pointing sharply at Ryan "has somehow gotten into this office without



authorization, and..."

Elizabeth cut in, raising her voice to overpower him. "Yes! Exactly! He stole the CEO's access card. I saw him use it. And yet everyone is just... standing around! No one is doing anything. I've been trying to get someone to actually take action, but apparently..."

The man in the suit froze, his expression darkening instantly.

He lifted his hand, not quickly, but with authority of someone who expected to be obeyed and said in a cold, sharp tone,

"Shut up, woman."

The command landed like a slap. Elizabeth's voice stopped mid-sentence.

Her mouth remained open for a fraction of a second before slowly closing. She stared at him, stunned, like she wasn't sure she'd heard correctly.

The man took two slow steps forward, with his eyes fixed on Elizabeth. "Do you have any idea who you've been talking to?" His tone was calm now, but filled with irritation.

Elizabeth's chest rose and fell faster, but she didn't answer.

"That man you've been insulting..." He pointed toward the desk, "...is Ryan Walker, the CEO of Nova Inc."

The silence that followed was so heavy Elizabeth couldn't speak.

Elizabeth's head turned slowly, as if her neck no longer obeyed her to fully turn toward Ryan.



Her gaze swept over him again, this time noticing the details she had ignored before.

There was something about Ryan's confidence in the way he sat, if truly he stole the card, how was he this confident and why did that guard turn back and dismissed her concerns?

Her pupils widened.

Her breath hitched in her throat.

Her knees felt faintly unsteady, but she forced herself to stay upright.

Behind her, Julian had gone pale, his jaw hanging so low it might as well have hit the floor.

No one moved or spoke...

Inside Elizabeth's head, thoughts crashed against each other.

CEO? No, impossible, it couldn't be. This was Ryan. Ryan, the man she had laughed at, the man she divorced, the man she had dismissed and humiliated. The man she thought she had outgrown.

And yet, here he was, sitting right in front of her as if he belonged there.

Her vision blurred slightly, and she felt a strange combination of shame and disbelief settle over her.

The worst part, the part that hurt even more than the second-in-command's sharp words, was that Ryan had not said a single thing to her.

He did not have to say anything.

He sat there calmly, his eyes fixed on her, as if he had all the time in the



world.

He was watching her, waiting for her to respond.

For the first time in her life, she could not think of a single word to say, and the silence felt crushing.

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