

Chapter 120

Ryan and Claudia sat together on the sofa, as Claudia went into further details about her Ex-husband Bobby.

Ryan was leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, staring at the floor. His hands were loosely clasped.

"So, what are you saying in essence?" he asked her with a calm voice.

Claudia sat with her knees close together, her fingers twisting nervously in her lap. She had been speaking for a while, but couldn't find the best way to make Ryan have a clear picture of this man.

"Just like I've said earlier, he is dangerous..." she muttered.

"...He's dangerous, Ryan," she said again, her eyes moving toward him for a brief moment before darting away again. "You don't know the kind of man Bobby is. He doesn't just threaten... he follows through."

Ryan's eyes didn't leave the spot on the floor. His jaw flexed slowly as he listened.

"You're telling me that this man, your ex-husband, isn't even in town right now, but he's still making threats from wherever he is?" he asked her.

"Yes," she said without hesitation. "And he told me... that it's only a matter of time before he comes here himself." Her voice dropped, almost breaking from the accumulated fear. "When he does, he's going to make my life miserable..."

Ryan finally lifted his head to look at her. His gaze was filled with anger. "What does he want from you, Claudia? After the divorce... what's left? Why is he still coming after you?"



Claudia let out a bitter, shaky laugh. "What's left? Everything I've built since I left him. He said... he wants my businesses, all of them." 1

Ryan straightened, his brows pulling together. "Your businesses?"

She nodded, looking him directly in the eye now. "Ricco S-Class Store, Duval Beauty Care and BeautySure, he wants them all. Every single one of them. He said they belong to him now, that I should just hand them over and... keep only my role as Nova's brand ambassador."

Ryan stared at her for a moment as though trying to make sure he'd heard correctly.

Then slowly, he responded to what she just said.

"So... let me get this straight. Bobby... your ex-husband thinks you're going to hand over everything you've worked for, everything you've grown, to him?"

Claudia nodded, her lips pressing into a thin line.

Ryan sat back slightly, shaking his head with a humorless chuckle. "He must be stupid."

Her voice turned softer. "He's not stupid, Ryan. He's calculating, he knows what he is doing, and he knows exactly how to hurt me. He gave me a deadline, if I don't give him what he wants by then, he said he'll... come here personally. And... make me regret it."

Ryan's head moved slowly toward her. "What deadline?"

Claudia hesitated, her hands twisting together. "...Today, the deadline is today."

The word made Ryan shocked, he couldn't imagine that Claudia hid this



from him until the deadline was here.

Ryan's calm expression changed a little. His gaze narrowed dangerously. "You mean to tell me... today is the deadline, and you're only telling me now?"

"I didn't want to—"

"You didn't want to burden me," he cut in, his voice rising a little. "You think keeping something like this to yourself protects me? It doesn't, it just leaves you vulnerable. And now, here we are, with him thinking he can walk into your life and dictate terms."

Claudia flinched at the tone but didn't look away. "I was scared, Ryan. I didn't know how you'd react."

"Scared of me?" he asked, his voice dropping even lower.

"No," she said quickly. "Scared that... once I told you, you'd feel responsible for fixing it. And I didn't want you to take on my battles when you already have so many of your own."

Ryan's eyes darkened. "Claudia, if Bobby takes you as an enemy, then I'm his enemy too."

She looked down again, and the silence that followed lasted for several seconds.

Finally, Ryan exhaled through his nose, forcing his tone to level out. "What else does he want, apart from your businesses?"

Claudia's lips trembled before she spoke again. "He wants me to marry him again."

The words made Ryan's head snap back slightly. "He what?"



She nodded once, painfully slow. "He said this time, it would be different. He would control everything I have so that I'd never be independent again. So that I'd have no choice but to... stay."

Ryan's hands curled into fists, his knuckles becoming harder. His teeth clenched so hard it was audible when he spoke. "This man... is out of his mind."

Claudia swallowed hard. "He's not out of his mind, Ryan. He knows exactly what he's doing. And that's what makes him dangerous."

Ryan's gaze stayed locked on her. He was about to say something when a sound suddenly broke the silence.

Claudia's phone was ringing.

The vibration came, and as she glanced down at the screen, her eyes went wide in horror.

Her back stiffened, her breathing hitched, and the phone remained frozen in her hand, as she kept staring at it.

Ryan's gaze shifted to her instantly. "Who is it?"

She didn't answer right away. Instead, she slowly turned the phone around so that he could see the name glowing on the screen.

Bobby...

Ryan's expression darkened even more, his jaw tightening as though the name itself was an insult. "Answer it," he said calmly.

Claudia's eyes darted to his. "Ryan..."