


### Chapter 121

Claudia's fingers trembled over the phone, her breath hitched, and she was frozen. She didn't swipe and she didn't decline... 

Ryan's gaze sharpened. "Pick it up," he said, his voice was calm but carrying the kind of authority that made refusal feel impossible.

Claudia shook her head slightly, her lips parting. "Ryan... I can't—"

Before she could finish, Ryan reached forward and, with one smooth motion, plucked the phone from her hands. He didn't hesitate, his thumb swiped across the screen, and in the same movement, he pressed the speaker button.

The line clicked, and almost instantly, Bobby's voice filled the room, sounding very hoarse.

"So..." Bobby began with a very slow tone. "You really think you can just ignore me? After all the warnings I've given you?"

Ryan didn't answer. He leaned back slightly on the sofa, one hand resting on his thigh, the other holding the phone casually in front of him. His eyes, however, never left Claudia's face.

Bobby kept talking, his voice rising with each word. "You think I'm bluffing, Claudia? You think I'm some man you can just walk away from without consequences? You're wrong. Dead wrong, Claudia. And now... now I'm on my way back to town."

Claudia's body stiffened at the words on my way back to town. Her hands gripped the edge of the sofa cushion until her knuckles tightened.

Bobby's voice continued... "When I get there, I will make you suffer. Not just in one way, not just physically, but financially, emotionally... in every



way I can. I will make you wish you had never crossed me.”

Ryan’s eyes narrowed slightly, but he stayed silent, letting the man talk.

Bobby went on. “You think your little businesses make you untouchable? You think Nova protects you? Claudia... you have no idea what I can do to you. No idea how quickly I can take everything you think you own and turn it to dust under my feet.”

Claudia’s lips trembled, but before she could speak, Ryan gave her a subtle shake of his head, signaling to her to stay quiet.

There was a pause on the other end of the line, making Claudia even more scared. Then Bobby’s voice softened, but the danger in it only became sharper.

“You’re in danger, Claudia. Real danger from me, and the only way to stop it is to stop pretending you’re free. We both know you’re mine.”

Ryan’s thumb brushed the edge of the phone, and finally, after letting Bobby’s words come to an end, he spoke for the first time. His tone was calm as he spoke..

“That’s a big lie,” Ryan said, his voice came with authority. “You’re not capable of half the things you just said. You’re making empty threats, and nothing you do is going to change that.”

On the other end of the line, there was silence for a full one minute before Bobby’s voice snapped back, confused and sharp. “Who the hell is this? Who are you talking to me?”

“You don’t need to know my name,” Ryan replied calmly. “What you need to know is that everything you just said? None of it will happen.” The boldness in his voice shocked Bobby, and he wondered deep down



who this man was.

Bobby scoffed loudly. "I wasn't talking to you, I was talking to my wife. So if you don't mind, give her the phone.

"She's not your wife," Ryan said without hesitation.

There was another pause, the kind of pause where you could almost hear the other man processing the audacity of what had just been said.

"...What did you just say?" Bobby asked slowly, his voice was filled with disbelief.

"You heard me," Ryan said, leaning back in his seat, perfectly at ease. "She's not your wife, she hasn't been for a long time. You have no right over her, not now and not ever again."

There was a sharp sigh from the other end, followed by a bitter laugh. "Oh, I get it now. So... Claudia's in another man's house. Is that it? That's why she's too much of a coward to talk to me herself?"

Claudia's mouth opened as if to respond, but Ryan turned his head toward her and gave a slight shake of his head.

"She doesn't need to talk to you," Ryan said simply. "And if you think you coming to town will change anything, you're wrong. It won't bother anyone here."

Bobby's voice hardened. "You have no idea who you're dealing with."

"Neither do you," Ryan countered, his tone was still calm. "But you're about to find out."

For the first time, Bobby seemed momentarily at a loss for words. When he spoke again, the anger was raw. "Whoever you are... you're going to



regret this. You're going to regret speaking to me like this."

Ryan's lips curled, controlling his anger. "The only one who's going to regret anything... is you. And you're going to regret it the moment you step foot in this town."

"Is that a threat?" Bobby asked, his voice rising.

"No," Ryan said evenly. "It's a fact."

There was a heavy silence...

Finally, Bobby's voice came back, sounding lower now. "We'll see."

The line went dead.

Claudia swallowed hard. "Ryan..."

"You should get some rest," he said.