

Chapter 127

The tall glass doors slid open, and Ryan stepped out, flanked on both sides by the two uniformed officers.

His hands weren't cuffed, but the firm grips on both his arms made it clear there would be no freedom of movement.

His staff had already begun to gather on the pavement. Some whispered to one another in low, anxious voices.

"Where are they taking the CEO?"

"Is he being arrested?"

Others simply stared in shock, wondering what was happening. They clearly had no idea why the police would be taking a man like Ryan Walker.

"Mr. Walker?" one of the female receptionists called out, her voice trembling. "What's going on? Why are they—?"

"Stay calm," Ryan interrupted gently, lifting his chin. His voice was steady and composed. "Everything is fine. Go back to your work."

"Fine?!" another staff member said from somewhere in the crowd. "Sir, they're—"

"Go inside," Ryan said again, this time firmer. His eyes swept the crowd, locking briefly with a few familiar faces. "Do not panic. Do not speculate. Just... carry on with your work, I'll be back."

Despite all that was happening, he was still very composed.

The officers didn't pause. They guided him down the steps toward the



waiting black-and-white vehicle parked outside.

The door was already open, waiting for him to enter.

Claudia stood off to the side, her fists clenched at her sides. Her chest rose and fell quickly, her lips pressed into a thin, angry line.

Rage burned in her eyes not just at the sight of Ryan being taken, but at the knowledge that this was all orchestrated.

She didn't move, not until the door shut behind him and the car began to pull away. Even then, she stood frozen for a second, watching the taillights grow smaller. Her nails dug into her palms.

And then, without hesitation, she reached into her bag and pulled out her phone. Her thumb moved fast, scrolling through her contacts until she found his name.

Bobby Greene.

Her jaw tightened as she pressed "Call." The dial tone barely rang twice before the line clicked.

"My sweet wife," Bobby's voice drawled on the other end, smooth and infuriatingly confident. "Didn't take you long to call me. Desperate and missing hubby already, Claudia?"

"Bobby," she said sharply, no time for pleasantries. "I need you to answer me truthfully, for once in your miserable life. Are you behind what just happened to Ryan?"

There was silence for a moment, long enough for her to hope, foolishly, that maybe he would deny it. But then, his laugh came.

"Oh, Claudia," he said slowly, "I have to admit... it's nice to hear you like



this. 'That desperation in your voice. 'That... anger. You've been humbled, haven't you? And I've barely started."

Her grip on the phone tightened so hard. "This isn't a game. If you had anything to do with —"

"Of course I did," he interrupted casually, as if talking about something little. "Did you think I'd just sit back and watch you live your perfect little life while you humiliated me? No, no. I told you... I'd take everything from you, piece by piece. And Ryan Walker? Oh, he just happens to be a perfect piece to remove from your little puzzle."

Claudia's breath was stuck in her throat. "Why him? You don't even know him—"

"I didn't," Bobby said, his tone turning into something colder. "But I did my research. And guess what I found? Ryan Walker is a mutual enemy. Mine and Lord Ryder's."

The name made Claudia's blood run cold, but she forced herself to keep her voice steady. "Lord Ryder."

"That's right," Bobby continued smoothly. "Turns out we both want the same thing, for very different reasons, of course. She wants to destroy him, take over Nova, make him watch as everything he's built crumbles. And me? I want to see you squirm. I want to see your life burned down until you have nothing left but me to turn to. So, we made a little arrangement."

Claudia's voice hardened instantly. "It won't happen. None of it. You're both wasting your time. Ryan will fight back, and he'll win. You can't—"

Bobby chuckled again, interrupting her. "Oh, Claudia. It's already happening. Haven't you noticed? 'The great Ryan Walker being walked



out of his own building, in front of all his employees, accused of fraud? The humiliation alone is enough to make cracks in his precious empire.”

Her chest tightened. “He’ll clear his name. The truth will come out that you and Lord Ryder framed him.”

“Truth?” Bobby said, almost laughing at the word. “The truth doesn’t matter when the story’s already been written. And this story? Ends with Ryan Walker... gone. Permanently.”

That made her freeze. She didn’t even realize she had stopped breathing until her lungs ached.

“What do you mean... gone?” she asked quietly.

“I mean,” Bobby said, drawing out each word slowly to make sure it sank into her, “this is the last day you’ll ever see him.”

Her grip on the phone loosened. “That doesn’t make sense. If he’s with the police, I can see him whenever I want. I can—”

“You really think he’s with the police?” Bobby asked, amusement was showing in his voice.

Claudia’s stomach dropped. “What are you talking about?”

There was a long pause before he answered, and when he did, his voice was soft. “Because those men weren’t police, Claudia. Oh, the uniforms are real enough... but the men wearing them? They’re Falcon Creed, Lord Ryder’s people. They work for her, not the state.”

The words hit her like a physical blow. Her vision swam for a second, her knees threatening to buckle.

“That’s... that’s not possible,” she whispered, but the protest felt hollow



even to her own ears.

"It's more than possible," Bobby said with a smirk she could detect through the line. "It's happening right now. And while you're standing there wasting time talking to me... they're taking him somewhere you'll never find."

Her hand went numb, and the phone slipped from her fingers, hitting the floor.